



# 405 ALIVE

"Time Travel without the TARDIS"



Issue 27, Third Quarter 1995  
(actually published Spring 1996)

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...and plenty more stupidity

RECALLING THE GOLDEN YEARS OF  
BLACK & WHITE TELEVISION  
(ISSN 0969-8884)

**Fair warning: FOR ADULT INTELLECTUALS ONLY**

## 405 ALIVE

Issue 27, Third Quarter 1995 (in theory, anyway)

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### LEGAL WARNING, particularly for New Readers

By reading this magazine you are entering a Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), where normal values, logic and timescales do not apply. At the least you may feel unable to put the magazine down until you have read it through to the very end. As you read it, you may also feel strangely mellow and entirely unable to consider doing anything else useful for 24 hours. Alternatively you may feel a sudden urge to have money extracted painlessly by one of our advertisers. Anything may happen and at the very worst you may enter a Permanent Autonomous Zone (PAZ) of your own creation.

We describe **405 Alive** as **Your Escape from Ordinary Literature**, but be warned that unwary neophytes have been known to degenerate into hopeless wrecks gibbering meaningless phrases such as 'modulator', 'open reel', 'image orthicon', 'telerecording' and '10 kilocycle line whistle'. Sadly there is no cure apart from deeper addiction.

DO NOT PROCEED FURTHER if you are unsure of your ability to handle hard-core old technology. You have been warned. This magazine should not be left out where children or people of an unsympathetic disposition may find it.



# IT MAKES YOU THINK

Intellectually active people develop dementia at a later age than other people, according to a report in the US journal *Science*. A study by psychologists at the University of California found rather surprisingly that young Berkeley professors had lower powers of recall than the control group. But In the over-60s age group, the picture was very different; the professors' performance was unchanged, but that of the control group sunk by almost 20 per cent.

**-- Reported in the *Guardian* newspaper. Now you know why it was a good idea to choose a technically demanding hobby...**

"Truth is not only stranger than fiction, it's much more profitable."

-- *William Randolph Hearst*

To convert from British firkins to US firkins, multiply by 1.2009. To convert from stilbs to lamberts, multiply by 3.14159. October 12, 2002 will be a Thursday.

There are no stupid questions...only stupid answers.

Overnight success doesn't come overnight.

Small print leads to large risk.

"Dad, how do you test the valves which are in the valve tester? --*Eric Gonzalez, age 7.*

"Start off every day with a smile and get it over with." --*W.C. Fields.*

If at first you *do* succeed, try not to look too astonished.

Diplomacy is the art of saying "Nice doggie!"... until you can find a rock.

"Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and striving after wind" -- *Ecclesiastes 4:6.*

**This last one contributed by Dave Higginson. If anyone knows how to achieve this, please write in and tell me! [Editor]**



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## FROM THE EDITOR ...

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Once again this issue will reach you late and once again I crave your indulgence. The past six months of this year have been some of the busiest of my life and have been compounded with medical problems. When you are a one-man band, these things have a profound effect and consequently I have found it totally impossible to maintain even the customarily relaxed publishing schedule of *405 Alive*. Those of you who have been subscribers some while will know that the magazine always appears in the end (your money is safe!) and by general consensus, the articles are worth reading however 'late' they arrive through your letterbox. In truth, our subject is mainly timeless so a month or two's delay should not harm it, indeed it may even have improved in the process of maturing!

Another point. Currently I have five (yes, five!) box files of material waiting to be used in the magazine. Please be patient if your article or letter has not been published yet. Thanks.

And so... on with the show!

## MISSION STATEMENT

It has become fashionable for just about every organisation under the sun to devise a 'Mission Statement' which sets out, usually in rather pompous language, where it is coming from and what it aims to achieve. Not wishing to buck the trend, *405 Alive* hereby states its case.

This is an independent, not-for-profit magazine devoted to the study and preservation of old television technology and programming. It embodies and entirely relies upon the goodwill of the editorial contributors and the readers – in other words it should be something to enjoy!

The magazine is produced in spare time *as and when the opportunity permits* and on a basis that aims to achieve the best results commensurate with modest cost.

For this reason we don't have colour illustrations, art paper or needle-sharp photo reproduction – the books just wouldn't balance and we don't wish to set subscriptions any higher! Thank you for your understanding and continuing support; may your filaments continue to glow brightly.



## LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS

...and not all with stamps on!

### **From Mike Izzyky:**

Seen at the Tunbridge Wells audiojumble... what do you think of 65 quid for an empty TV22 box with no back or mask?

*An optimist?* [Editor].

### **From Dr Malcolm Baird, Canada:**

The Royal Ontario Museum exhibit, referred to on p. 25 of your latest issue, is in full swing. They are holding a special event on April 14 at which the reconditioned Baird Televisor will be operated. I've been asked along to say a few words. Also, I gave a public lecture here at McMaster University on 28th February, marking the 70th (+ 1 month) anniversary of the first demonstration by J. L. Baird in January 1926.

### **From Paul King, Worplesdon:**

I have some information, which you may already know but here goes anyway. I attended Ravensbourne College, Bromley as a student between 1976-78 on their broadcast TV Technical Operators course. This was to be the last course of the old style before the equipment was replaced with 2001s I believe. There were two small studios each equipped with four Marconi Mk IIIs, plus a couple more for demonstrations of line up etc. (all originating from ABC/Thames and Rediffusion, one of which I believe is now on display in MOMI). There was a Pye valve vision mixer, Pye sound mixer, RCA TR22 2" machines an Ampex first generation 2" machine etc. In fact a working museum of 1950s equipment, but uprated to run at 625 line. There was even a pair of Marconi colour cameras, based I think on the Mk III technology, but I never saw these work. I think it reflects on the quality of equipment to be still working after so long and in the hands of students. What happened to all this equipment I do not know but hope it wasn't scrapped.

### **From Steve James, West Bridgford:**

I have found a 1973 LP record called *The Girl On The Test Card*, which has a big photo of Test Card F on the front (what else?). The tracks are a selection performed in the style of test card music (call *that* a selling point?). Among the interestingly titled original compositions are *King Size Test Card*, *Girl On The Test Card* and even *Six Two Five 405*!! The LP is credited to Pete Winslow & The King Size Brass and is on BBC Records 103S.

*Yes, an interesting record, probably released after viewers wrote in asking for real test card music on disc. I find many of the tracks remarkably reminiscent of Herb Alpert and his Tijuana Brass, almost to the point of plagiarism (sorry, 'an inspired tribute').* [Editor]

**From Bernard Wilkie, Surrey:**

I'm worried about you overworking. Remember your three priorities – imbibing, 405 Alive and drinking. Keep well.

*Thanks for the thought. I'm concerned as well but we're still here!* [Editor]

**From Richard Lamont, Stone:**

I got my 405 Alive yesterday morning. Delighted to read that Chas Miller is going to help out.

You say it takes you 100 hours to produce it. I'm not surprised. The result is so darned good I reckon it will take me nearly as long just to read it. Well done, and thank you.

**From Malcolm O'Neill, Carshalton:**

Life has been very hectic for me as usual these last couple of months. Anyway, we have managed to identify more ITA views in the 1957 G. Douglas Bolton book entitled **Presenting Britain**. They are as follows:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Plate 3  | Willy Lott's Cottage, Flatford, Suffolk. (Mendlesham ch. 11)    |
| Plate 4  | The River Ouse at Ely. (Mendlesham ch. 11)                      |
| Plate 6  | Windsor Castle. (Croydon ch. 9).                                |
| Plate 12 | Land's End. (Caradon Hill ch.12).                               |
| Plate 19 | Menai Bridge. (Arfon ch. 10, Moel-y-Parc ch. 11).               |
| Plate 23 | Ludlow Castle (Lichfield ch. 8).                                |
| Plate 28 | The River Trent, near Great Haywood, Staffs. (Lichfield ch. 8). |
| Plate 55 | Loch Lomond at Rowardennan, Stirlingshire (Black Hill ch. 10)   |

*Good detective work, Malcolm! For readers totally baffled by this, the various ITA transmitters were originally provided with black and white slides of attractive scenic views for showing during trade test transmissions. Several of these views were also used for the book **Presenting Britain** and when I get a moment, I shall try and track down the photo library which looks after these shots. Then we could have some new slides made, no doubt at none-too-cheap prices!* [Editor]

**From Bob Netherway, 28 Snowdon Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2EJ:**



The BBC have just written to me with information about your magazine *405 Alive*. I would like to subscribe to the magazine, and enclose my cheque for one year's subscription.

Also, further to this, do you, or any of your contacts in the vintage television world know of a book about the history of BBC tv engineering from the beginning in 1936 up until its 25th anniversary in 1961 called **25 Years of BBC Television**? This book was probably written by Sir Harold Bishop, or Sproson, and may have been published by either Oxford University Press or BBC Publications in October, 1961. It is *not* the blue monograph bearing a similar title, but is a full sized hardback containing some colour plates of photographs taken off-screen of the original NTSC colour tests carried out at Alexandra Palace in the mid to late fifties (you can actually see the scanning lines!). I saw this volume in Exeter Central library in 1973, and the BBC confirmed its existence ten years later, but recently they could not trace it for me. The dust jacket had a picture of a very primitive colour set on it, and the book contained many other photographs of old BBC equipment. I have written to just about every library and individual I can think of, to no avail.

I keep Test Card 'C' alive by playing it out from my Amiga 500 computer, using Photon Paint graphic software. It is a good program to use as the video component extends to the edges of the raster. I have made a few VHS tapes for people who want to watch the test cards, but it is better to have it on tap all day, even if it is made up of 625 lines! I would much prefer to get my 405 sets going, but due to my failing eyesight, I can no longer do soldering.

*Keep up the good work, Bob! Hopefully one of our knowledgeable readers can come up with the details of the book you are trying to find. Please reply direct or better, through the magazine.* [Editor].

#### **From Brian Renforth, Sandyford:**

Have any other readers come across the problem of **live** coaxial sockets? We all know there's a risk if the mains plug is incorrectly wired and of the isolating components should fail, but why when all isolating components have been replaced and the set correctly wired?

The set in question is a Decca DM2/C 14" model from 1957. What also makes this more unusual is the fact that the problem is intermittent! One can tell when the 'fault' is present as there's 'hum' when brushing a finger across the brass front trim around the panel (not electrically connected anywhere), as one does when three-wired equipment has the Earth lead disconnected. The answer would be to use an isolating transformer, but surely the set should be adequately isolated from the mains? An unusual one anyway.

**From Tim Alcock, 46 Elizabeth Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8QJ:**

I'd very much like to hear from anyone with *complete* recordings (i.e. the whole song) of *Here's Looking At You* and *A Mighty Maze of Magic Mystic Meg*, also similar television-related music.

*I think Tim should spend less time watching television, it's obviously rotting his brain. But if you can help him in his addiction and supply some Magic Rays of Light for his problem, he'd be most pleased to have your letter. [Editor]*

**From John Wakeley, Colliers Wood:**

Thanks very much for issue 26; no matter if it's a little late (you can't push 405 signals down a delay line....). As always it's great to see such interest amongst our little group. I thought it was only BMWs that were smuggled abroad in containers, not HMVs. We must all watch out for theft.

I have been presented with quite a selection of vintage TVs in the last six months. Two Ferguson 12" 988Ts, a 17" Pye Continental, a gleaming Ferguson 606T 17" and an Argosy/Regentone 19" fitted with the 10-17 chassis.

I get lots of 'presents' from customers: radio sets, loads of them... Where does all this stuff come from? It never fails to amaze me! I have been given a BTH portable receiver circa 1920 (see *Setmakers*). It is very clean and original, complete with brass plate on top. Only thing is, it lacks its two valves. Can any reader help me with any information? How many of them still exist? (*Letters to John at 108 High Street, Colliers Wood, London, SW19 2BT.*)

On the subject of vintage aerials I have been taking a few pictures of some nice examples seen around the outskirts of London and West Sussex. I will try to get my act together and forward them to you; no doubt the readers will be able to identify the makers, etc..

Note. Check out your local rubbish dump! All manner of ancient electronics are to be found. Don't forget to check out the wire bin for obsolete mains connectors, vintage mains leads and old brown 405/vhf co-ax complete with period plugs.

Keep up the good work Andrew; don't worry about the newsletter being a bit late. Strange how people moan about the cost of *405 Alive* – they no doubt think a packet of fags good value at £2.80-plus!

**Via the Internet:**

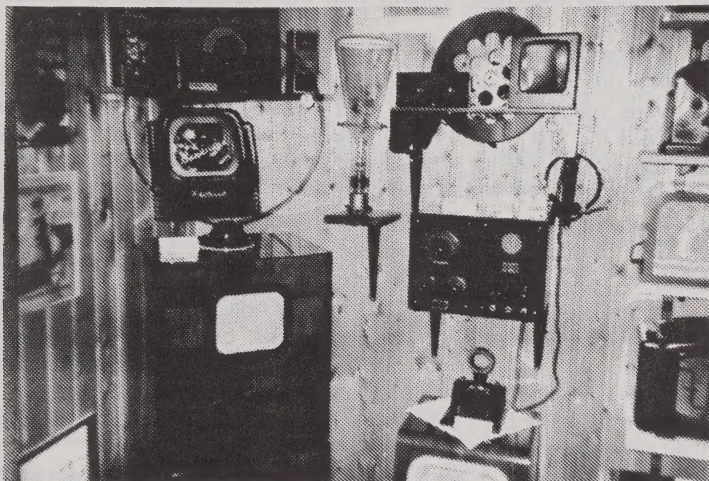
I used to maintain Marconi Mk IV cameras in the mid 70s. I worked at CJOC TV in Lethbridge where we ran three of the poor battered brutes, we got a couple from CHCH in Hamilton at that time which looked like



they had just left the factory. CHCH used only Marconi replacement parts while we used whatever we could gather at the local electronics distributors. We also had an RCA TK-42 (I think it was) and later they had some Marconi Mark VIIIs after I left.

In the mid 70s all the large market stations were entirely colour but we still ran all local production in monochrome when I started there in 1973 (studio, telecine, VTR) and converted to colour during my five years stint. Network programmes were in colour but nothing else in small town stations of that era.

*Richard Loken VE6BSV, Systems Programmer - VMS Athabasca University, Athabasca, Alberta Canada \*\* tech@cs.athabascau.ca \*\**



**Wilfried Meier**, one of our German readers, sent some attractive photos with his renewal cheque. Here's one of them, showing an Ekco receiver along with some other treasures in his museum collection.

## FEEDBACK

### **From Brian Renforth, Sandyford:**

Re **Stan Wootton's letter**, readers should look out for the book **Television Explained** by W.E. Miller, published from 1949 to 1951. I managed to pick up the fourth edition, dated 1951. This book features several off-screen photographs of the BBC Television Service tuning signal, i.e. the one in use at the time the book was published. The

hands certainly did move as the pictures were taken within minutes of each other!

Re **Richard Bell's letter on the 'Vintage Thames' season**, I understand (though stand open to correction) that on repeats new idents were inserted in place of the old ones to hide the age of the programme being repeated. Dates were changed from the instantly recognisable numeric form to Roman numerals for the same reason! Whilst I can see Thames's point of view, it would have been acceptable if they placed their triangle following the original 'Colour Production' still. Seeing programmes such as black-and-white episodes of *Bless This House* on UK Gold, ending with the triangle ident *in colour* is scandalous!

Euston Films programmes such as *Special Branch* and *The Sweeney* are missing any form of Thames identification on fresh prints; they were spliced on the start and endings of original prints. An example is the first series of *The Sweeney*, made in 1974. The Euston Films copyright is MCMLXXIV whilst, on the original print the Thames copyright is UK 1975, the series first having been shown from January 1975. Many of these original prints were repeated in most ITV regions from 1983. Strangely enough, the second episode, *Jackpot*, is Thames copyrighted UK 1976! Can anyone explain that?!

Repeats from 1989 came from new prints with no Thames ident but do retain the original break sequences, assuming you watched them on ITV or Channel Four and not on UK Gold. Many may think these points are trivial but it's hoped that those responsible will get to read these points and take note. The BBC seemed to do so with regard to their sell-through tapes!

TV Fault Report. Here's some info that might help avoid those involved in restoration tearing their hair out!

**Philips G6.** Some unusual effects can be caused by dodgy plug/socket connections and not what you'd expect.

1. Line Shimmer over whole screen after running for 15-30 minutes, looking like EHT trouble. Ensure that main chassis connection to the CRT aquadag is secure (bottom centre of chassis).
2. Intermittent Frame Creeping, mainly at the bottom. Check the plugs/sockets from the convergence box to the main chassis, above octal scan coil plug.
3. Looks like tuner problems and/or intermittent sound. Check the four plug and socket connections from control panel (i.e. four rotary controls) to main chassis at the left-hand side on looking at the rear.
4. Set the boost voltage to 560V or less if good focus etc. can still be obtained around 530V at 405 lines.

The foregoing information was compiled from 1992 to the present. No doubt similar effects can occur on other sets – and cars!



Usually closing the pins on the plugs to ensure a tighter fit, also spraying and cleaning with WD40 are sufficient.

### **From Jim Pople, Lyme Regis:**

Many thanks for all those back numbers of *405 Alive*. I'm just getting to the end of them and what fascinating material they contain. What follows is a selection of thoughts and answers arising from my reading of past issues so feel free to use all or part as you will for publication.

**Brian Pethers, Issue 18.** *Carriage and Pair* was not written by Robert Farnon but by Benjamin Frankel for the film *So Long At The Fair*, starring Jean Simmons.

Dicky Howett's article on **telerecording** reminded me of my minor role on Coronation Day. Being then in the BBC Television Film Unit, I was at Kay's film laboratories where I received the combined prints of the recording, topped and tailed and leaedered them up and then sent them on their way by despatch rider to the Alexandra Palace racecourse where they were then helicoptered to Heathrow. The fastest thing across the Atlantic was a photo -reconnaissance Canberra, which duly delivered the film to America, whence the viewers saw it virtually in real time. No satellites then!

I also worked on the **"Dem. Film"** – Job 200 for those who used it for a multitude of petty cash vouchers. It consisted of a reel of archive or new transmitter building interspersed with one reel (1000ft of 35mm) of our old friend Test Card C. It was always being re-cut and updated as new transmitters opened up.

Many of the **Interlude films** were shot by the late Monty Redknap, who had been a pre-war newsreel cameraman and who would take off with a camera and find a new location. I also remember having to double up the Harp Interlude in length and trying to match the harp strings at the end and the beginning; a very quick dissolve whilst they were quivering provided the answer.

Reverting to the theme of **telerecording**, A-R TV's telerec. section was at Wembley Studios and used two French Cameflex 35mm cameras. The head of department was the late Jim Runkel and I believe that initially two French technicians were employed to keep the extremely noisy beasts coping with the thousands of feet of film running through, far more than those used by the AR film department at the time.

Malcolm Batchelor in Issue 20 brings up the subject of **Small Time**. I directed many of these in the 1950s and can add these to the list. *Colonel Crook*, *The Three Scampis* (Basil Brush before he defected to Auntie) *Chippie*, *Brock and Bruin* (known in the studio as Rack and Ruin!) and of course *Pussycat Willum*. We were convinced that Willum had a malign persona and he certainly seemed to impress this on his creator. Shades of *Dead of Night*. Incidentally, *Sixpenny*

*Corner* was an early A-R soap and nothing to do with little people in a phone box. *Take Your Pick* and *Double Your Money* were telerecorded at Wembley Studios.

*This letter went astray – sorry it took so long to be published!* [Editor].

**From Jim Pople (again! This time we didn't lose his letter...):**

Reading about Alexandra Palace and BBC **Television Newsreel** in Issue 26 reminded me of the signature tune *Girls In Grey* which was probably recorded by the Queens Hall Light Orchestra and of the words which were sung to the tune by the newsreel staff. They went...

*Day by day we blaze away  
And we don't care what the viewers say,  
Fox, Cox, Beale and Seal are ever so bright and sporty.  
Quick to dub and quick to scrub  
And throw the film in the cutter's tub,  
We're all happy and gay working for Mr Dorté.*

Fox of course, is now Sir Paul. Duncan Beale and Esmond Seal were film editors and Philip Dorté was Head of Film.

**From Phil Elgey, Clayton-le-Moors:**

Regarding **War-time TV**, I think that there must be a conspiracy of silence about the reception of French TV in wartime. I am no electronic boffin but may I make the following observations...

a) As a boy, living in Littleborough, Lancs. some 12 miles north of Manchester, at the most 500ft above sea-level and tight up against the Pennine Chain, I remember watching TV transmissions from Germany on a Nipkow-type machine in the local radio dealer's shop. Picture quality was better than I could take on a Box Brownie.

b) The Eiffel Tower is a thousand feet high, and Alexandra Palace stands on a substantial hill, height above sea-level not known.

c) When Midlands TV opened around 1950 (1949 actually), the Observatory public house in Blackburn, some 100 miles away as the crow flies, had a TV set in the pub showing perfect pictures. Alas it didn't last very long because the customers only bought one drink and sat mesmerised all evening.

d) A colleague at Rochdale ATE (automatic telephone exchange) built a set using a VCR97 tube and received Sutton Coldfield loud and clear. Birmingham to Rochdale 85-90 miles. Quite an experience, as long viewing produced a rosy look over everything [no doubt on account of the brain compensating for the green screen of the VCR97 tube – Editor].



e) The easiest way to get something onto the back-burner is to sideline it and eventually it will be out of harm's way. This action is well known to old GPO men and can even happen to human beings, a classic case being John Logie Baird after he lost the contest with Marconi/EMI for our national system. If you want a good read, and some eye-popping matters, not to mention a comprehensive bibliography with I should think, a good year's reading, try

**The Secret Life of John Logie Baird**, by Tom McArthur and Peter Waddell. Published by Hutchinson, London 1986. ISBN 0-09-158720-4,

Probably the best source is via the inter-library loan scheme. It gets better as you read along!

Please excuse the top-grade typing, I'm practising ready for the day when arthritis sets in! I've been using so much Tippex that I'm now a junkie. Do you know of a good drying-out clinic?

#### **From John Wakely, Colliers Wood:**

Just another quick note. I read with interest the mention of the **T.V. GRAVEYARD** (issue 26, page 64) and a bell rang in my distant past. As a lad of sixteen in 1964, I used to work in a television shop at Kingston Road, South Wimbledon. We used to manufacture replacement line output transformers for the old Ekco T221/T330 series. The original types were constructed in clear perspex and would break down, producing a sickly sweet smell that hung around the living room for days. I used to rewind obsolete types using ancient coil winding equipment and in fact still have my old note book giving details of turns per layer etc..

We also broke up hundreds of old models, selling the spares to callers and mail order customers that learned of our existence through adverts in the then-named *Practical Television*. Around that time the owner of the shop was approached by either the BBC or ITV (I cannot remember which) with a view to making a programme about what happens to old unwanted televisions. The owner at the time declined the offer and the production team eventually made the programme at the TELEVISION GRAVEYARD. What a gem if we could find that programme now!

We had all manner of odd characters as customers in those days. One old-timer used a sort of ice cream cart/bicycle to transport customers' sets around. A flap opened at the front and he would slide the "BOX" in for delivery. We also sold second-hand serviced sets (14-inch GEC model 1746 sets for £7.10s). I had a letter from a farmer on the Isle of Lewis; he had never owned a television and wanted us to send him one of our bargains by British Road Services. I sorted him out a Pye Continental with flywheel sync and full

Fringe specification. The set was picked up by BRS and was duly delivered a few days later, all for the inclusive price of twelve pounds, ten shillings [*Editor's note:* for those who are wondering what £12.10.0 is worth in today's money, it's roughly what a bus conductor would have earned in a week in those days].

One week later we received a letter from the Isle of Lewis. The chap was delighted beyond belief. He had no electricity and was operating the set via a rotary converter and lorry batteries. He had rigged up a huge aerial and was receiving a good picture from the BBC transmitter at Black Mountain. I will never forget that letter and felt delighted that I had been part of bringing television to this remote area. I thought I said a quick note...

### **From Michael Coxon, Derby:**

Thanks for Issue 26, better late than never. So much to say, so little time. Anyway, here are some thoughts on current subjects:

Page 9: **Richard Bell** is right to think that Anglia discontinued their Knight in 1988. A whole page is given over to the change in the May 1988 edition of *Invision* (a monthly supplement to *Broadcast* magazine). Under the heading "Knight out in Norwich", the magazine reports that the 29-year-old silver knight "has finally been retired to make way for a modern image." The new flag ident was devised by Robinson Lambie-Nairn, but unfortunately the exact launch date isn't given. Anyhow, Richard is right.

As for the **Thames ident**, this seems to be one of the less publicised ones. When Thames opened on 30th July 1968, their first symbol certainly wasn't the one most of us remember. The station's early programmes were topped and tailed by a still caption bearing the words "FROM THAMES" in white capitals on a black background (it survives on at least one episode of *Armchair Theatre* – *Editor*). Of course, some of the first Thames programmes were repeats of their predecessors' work, so this caption could have been shown live, allowing the Transmission Controller to cover up the ABC triangle or Rediffusion star that was actually on a recording. I've been told that Johnny Hawksworth's fanfare accompanied this still caption, but I'm too young to remember it and I haven't seen a recording at the time of writing.

That isn't all about the Thames ident. The colour version of the reflected symbol which I know and love is pretty distinctive. The right hand side shows Tower Bridge open, to allow a boat to pass through. ITV Yearbooks from 1970 show us something different. There, on the page headed "Programme Companies – Thames Television" is the reflections symbol. If you have any of these books, look carefully. Tower Bridge is closed to allow traffic to drive over, and there's no sign of a boat. I wonder if this alternative symbol was used briefly on



monochrome programmes in 1969? *[Interesting. One of our readers has seen a tape with what appears to be various experiments with the Thames ident music, some very similar to the ABC ident but eventually getting very close to the Thames ident we all know. His words, not mine. Editor]*

Page 62: The lady **announcer on ATV** was **Joan** Palmer. She married a programme director named Sam Fairhall.

Pages 9-10: 1 have the Johnny Gregory version of **Sucu-Sucu** that Mark Jurkiewicz mentions. It's from an album called "Channel Thrill" (Fontana STFL 585) The record also has a version of "The Avengers" (the Johnny Dankworth version). This doesn't sound like the version played on the programmes which were shown on Channel Four a few years back. Therefore I deduce that "Sucu-Sucu" is a cover version as well. I think the Laurie Johnson version is the original. The best way to establish the truth would be for Channel Four to repeat *Top Secret!*

*Tony Clayden rang in to confirm that the Laurie Johnson definitely made the original version; he added that Johnny Gregory never did anything original!*

#### **From Martin Loach, Dry Sandford:**

I was pleased to see the recent interest in **aerials**. I have never seen anyone really interested in this subject before, except for me. Has anyone else actually done anything to preserve any of these formidable structures? I doubt if there will be many surviving on roof tops into the next century; it is a miracle some of them are still there now. When you see how big they are when on the ground one can envisage the damage which could be done when they eventually fall.

I have a modest collection of Band I, II and III aerials. They would make an interesting display for a 405 convention one day (will it ever happen?). I store them in a dismantled state, so they can simply be bolted together when I need a fix. My favourite is a combined band I/III structure. The band I part is a conventional 'H' yagi with a band III slot fed broadside incorporated, something like a 7 X 7, I think from memory. This is a massive structure and one wonders how the erectors of the day ever got them up on the chimney.

These men were Real Erectors; the modern UHF or satellite installer is engaging in child's play in comparison. I even have some very well built arrays from the old Mastervision Cable TV mast in Abingdon, personally removed by me, and they are built to marine specifications.

Unfortunately I have no really unusual ones, if anyone could put any my way I would be most pleased! I have tried to persuade some house owners to let me take away their 'dangerous structures' but not

with any success. Its the usual story, once someone shows an interest, they start to wonder how they will loose out themselves.

By the way, Gareth Foster is, I believe, referring to the bow-tie version of the short back fire UHF aerial. These were quite common 20 years ago, supposedly being quite good in fringe areas but I cannot remember quite what their properties were.

*Yes, the article seems to have stirred up a lot of interest. We have a report, still to be confirmed, of a Band III parabolic surviving in Bridgnorth. I've always tried to spot vertical Band I arrays in Paris (in use until 1956 on their 441-line system on 46MHz) but have never spotted any there. [Editor]*

**CORRECTION:** A number of typos slipped through the last issue – sorry about that. Most were fairly obvious. Dicky Howett's phone number acquired a spurious digit 2; the real number is 01245-441811. Line whistle is of course 10 kilocycles, not 15; John Wakely reports his treasured Pye B16T burst its electrolytics when it read this error!

## TELEVISION NEWSREEL

### **BVWS Marconi Weekend, 21st/22nd September**

Those of you who are members of the British Vintage Wireless Society will be aware that the society is laying on a two-day 'spectacular' at the Harpenden Hall to celebrate the Marconi centenary (this is a members and guests only affair, I must say).

On the Sunday there will be the working vintage television display to end all displays and yours truly (AE) has been put in charge of arranging this. Would any BVWS member prepared to lend thoroughly reliable *working* sets of all vintages, ephemera and other exhibits please get in touch with me as soon as possible? This little number is going to take a lot of help and a lot of co-ordinating and of course, we want to make it the best possible if only to convince those unconvinced that television is the most highly developed and perfected mode of broadcasting.

The display will be set up early on the Sunday morning and broken down early evening, so your treasures will not be left in the hall overnight. We have been assured there will be adequate security at all times (I insisted on this!).

### **Volume One reprint running out**

Just a quick word to the wise! We're down to the last 20 copies of this eminent publication and it will not be economic to reprint them once they run out. If you had an intention to avail yourself of a copy, it would be wise to do so now. All four issues of volume one are included, stiff



covers and 116 pages. Price is £5 post-paid, from the usual Northampton address.

### **An end to boring Windows Wallpaper**

If you run Windows on your PC computer and are tired with the normal 'wallpaper' patterns, how would you like to display the ATV symbol or the BBC's first post-war tuning signal? Yes, you now have an alternative! It helps if you are slightly mad of course.

The good news is TEST CARDS 'R' US, a couple of very 'sad' people, have spent hours of time (not theirs, it's all right!) digitising and hand-crafting the editing of these two .BMP files. To acquire your very own copies, send a formatted 1.4Mb floppy disk and a stamped addressed envelope to 'Sad Offer' at the usual editorial address. Your disk will be returned within three weeks. If you're lucky you'll also get the two desired files. Please do not enclose correspondence with these requests as they may not be opened immediately and will likely be dealt with in occasional batches.

### **Missing *Till Death Us Do Part* turns up**

Your editor had the pleasure of discovering a number of lost BBC programmes recently in the collections of home cine enthusiasts, one of which was a missing episode of *Till Death Us Do Part*.

Neil Ingoe did the honours of identifying its title, *Alf's Dilemma*, and discovered it was first transmitted on 27th February 1967 as no. 10, series 2. He has compared the programme as found (it runs for just over twenty minutes) against an original soundtrack which someone tape recorded at the time, and it turns out that no less than 10 minutes of the programme has been removed, in three separate and rather crudely made cuts. Neil says the language in the cut segments is extremely racist, all about coons (and worse!), and although we would see it today as a parody of racism, the BBC was clearly extremely worried at one time and was taking no chances!

- ❖ Here's a transcript of the ITV programme *Schofield's Quest*, transmitted Sunday 5th November 1995. Thanks to Kris Partridge for sending it in...

### **Advert Appeal, Sarah Edwards**

This year is the 40th anniversary of the first ever television advert on ITV. You may remember in the first show of the series we appealed for the children of the Clarke shoe advert on behalf of the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television. Well, this appeal was so successful they have asked for our help in tracking down some adverts they are missing from their collection. The museum already has 15,000 in their library, including the more memorable ones like this.

The Museum of Photography, Film and Television would love to add to their collection. One of the adverts that visitors frequently ask for is the 1963 Nestlé *Jellimallo Bar* featuring The Beatles (animated). Do you know where this advert is?

Later in the series we will be appealing for some of the 23 missing adverts from the first night of television. [I think they mean *Independent television!* AE.]

### **New Book**

The following item spotted in *50s/60s TV Nostalgia ListServ* may be of interest to other fans of obscurities:

Terrace, Vincent. **Experimental Television Test Films, Pilots and Trial Series, 1925-1995: Seven Decades of Small Screen Almosts.** McFarland & Company, Inc. (Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640), 1996. ISBN 0-7864-0178-8. 952pp. \$99.50

Catalog blurb says, "This work includes over 3,000 experimental television programs, both aired and unaired, that almost became a series. Each entry includes the name of the show, length, network, air date (if appropriate), plot synopsis, cast, guest stars, producer, director, writer and music co-ordinator". Terrace is also author of **Television Specials** (1995)

Let me just add that McFarland publishes an enormous number of film and TV books, as well as titles in sports history and librarianship. Write them for their mammoth catalog....

A.J. Wright//meds002@uabdpdpo.dpo.uab.edu

If you have access to the Internet but don't yet receive the regular 50s/60 TV bulletins (no charge!), send e-mail to: [ab616@ccn.cs.dal.ca](mailto:ab616@ccn.cs.dal.ca) Put *Nostalgia TV* in the subject title and the word SUBSCRIBE as the message. To unsubscribe, write to the same address but use the word UNSUBSCRIBE. After this you will receive the electronic newsletter automatically.

### **USA tape releases**

It appears that across the Atlantic, Columbia Video Club (a division of Columbia Records, telephone 1-800-719-7600) are into vintage television series in a big way. This is a letter spotted on the Internet:

I just received a mailing from Columbia Video with a pamphlet showing 30 video series currently available for subscription on VHS. They are:



Flintstones  
Three Stooges  
Bewitched  
Star Trek

Perry Mason  
I Love Lucy  
Soap  
The Waltons  
Twilight Zone

M.A.S.H.

Hallmark Series  
Great Epics Series  
Schwarzenegger Series  
Star Trek: TNG

Clint Eastwood Series  
Bible Mysteries Series  
The Monkees  
Stephen King Series  
Lost In Space

Outer Limits

Superman (1950s)  
Mission Impossible  
Beverly Hillsbillies  
Abbott & Costello TV  
Series  
Gilligan's Island  
Have Gun – Will Travel  
I Dream of Jeannie  
The Brady Bunch  
John Wayne Movie  
Collection  
Voyage To The Bottom  
Of The Sea

Some of these are, or have been, on release here of course.

## NEW PRODUCT REVIEW

### ***Testcards 'R' Us: Solid-state Test Card Generator, £120.***

The Dinosaur Labs team have done it again! This time, under the new guise *Testcards 'R' Us*, they have come up with a compact testcard-on-a-chip generator which not only improves on the original design but is cheaper to boot!

You don't need a particularly long memory to recall there was an excellent testcard generator on the market about 18 months ago, which for various reasons ceased production. With the full approval of the original designer, they have updated the product and improved it, so that without further modification the generator can now produce up to eight different patterns (and switch between them without losing sync). You can even mix and match 625 and 405-line images and according to Dave Grant, most of their units have gone out with 625-line Test Card C as well as the 405-line version.

Needless to say, *405 Alive* just had to have a test run with an early sample and well, there's nothing to complain about! It just works fine. Build quality is first class and no, we didn't get it free in order we should say nice things about it!

The product is sold as a ready-to-run printed circuit board and requires only an unregulated DC power supply of 9 to 15 volts. The price for a completed board with one pattern is £125. Additional patterns are £25 for one or £40 for two; the range of tasty designs includes a variety of pre- and post-war tuning signals and captions, with more to come. Postage and packing is £3. A boxed version is not available yet and most users will probably decide to do their own thing.

Orders and enquiries (SAE please!) to Dave Grant, Testcards 'R'  
Us, 4 Kemble Drive, Bromley, Kent, BR2 8PZ.

### **Advertiser's Announcement**

*AMERICA'S FAVOURITE TELEVISION BOOK RECEIVES ITS MOST SWEEPING  
REVISION IN MORE THAN A DECADE...*

**THE COMPLETE DIRECTORY  
TO PRIME TIME NETWORK AND CABLE TV SHOWS  
1946-PRESENT  
Sixth Edition  
by Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh**

An American Book Award Winner  
More than 5,000 series listed!

Your TV trivia and research questions are all answered in the revised and updated **THE COMPLETE DIRECTORY TO PRIME TIME NETWORK AND CABLE TV SHOWS, 1946-PRESENT** (Ballantine Books Trade Paperback; October 9, 1995; \$23.00). Dubbed "The Encyclopedia Britannica of television" by *TV Guide*, this comprehensive directory lists every program alphabetically and includes the complete broadcast history, cast list, and plot summary, along with exciting behind-the-scenes stories about the shows and the stars.

And now for the first time, **THE COMPLETE DIRECTORY TO PRIME TIME NETWORK AND CABLE TV SHOWS** features extensive original cable coverage with more than 150 entries, including *Ren and Stimpy*, *Larry King Live*, and the Sci-Fi Channel. Other special features include:

- A new all-time top 100 programs list.
- More than 300 updated listings of continuing shows, including *The X-Files*, *NYPD Blue*, *Mad About You*, and *The Simpsons*.
- Expanded index of more than 15,000 personalities.
- Listings for the new Paramount & Warner Brothers TV networks.
- And much, much, more!

From *I Love Lucy*, *The Odd Couple*, and *The Brady Bunch* to *Home Improvement*, *The Larry Sanders Show*, and *Melrose Place*, this is the biggest and best television reference to turn to again and again for information on every night-time network series ever telecast and all the top network and cable series.

**AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL BOOKSTORE OR TO ORDER**



### **About the Authors:**

**Tim Brooks** is vice president of research at the USA network. He lives in Greenwich, Connecticut. **Earle Marsh** is a media consultant who has been vice president of research for Showtime/The Movie Channel. He lives in Yonkers, New York.

*It only remains to be said that this book is also a valuable guide to American shows aired on British television. It often turns up in the larger book shops in London.*

## **ON THE BOOKSHELF**

### **DISTANT VISION - ROMANCE AND DISCOVERY ON AN INVISIBLE FRONTIER**

**by Elma G. Farnsworth.**

**Published by Pemberley Kent Publishers, 2121 E. Garfield Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A at \$24.95 plus \$11.39 surface postage to UK addresses. Illustrated, 330 pages, hardback.**

Television is one of two or three inventions that have shaped the world in the 20th century. Yet the perceived history of television seems to depend very much on which country one lives in. Little is known in Britain about U.S. television history, and in the USA there is only a dim awareness that John Logie Baird sent the first television picture. Some day, a balanced history of television may be written from a global viewpoint; this would have to include not only the early work in Britain and the USA but contributions from other countries such as Russia and Germany. The complexity of such a book might render it unreadable for all but academic researchers!

In the meantime, Elma Farnsworth has written a highly readable biography of her late husband, who was in my view the outstanding U.S. television pioneer. Farnsworth and my father had very similar personalities. Both men were 'loners' in the sense that they never worked for large corporations. Both were obsessed by their research, and family life often had to take second place to television. Yet both men were good husbands and fathers.

Philo T. Farnsworth was born in 1906, the son of a farmer in the state of Utah. From an early age he was fascinated by 'inventions' such as the telephone and the primitive electrical power generators on the farms. In 1919, when his family moved to a farm in Idaho, young Philo discovered a pile of old magazines on radio and electronics left there by a previous tenant. These included articles on relativity and on the electron. In spite (or perhaps because) of his lack of formal education, Farnsworth was quick to grasp these new concepts and he formed the idea of an all-electronic television system. Mrs. Farnsworth tells the story that he got

the idea of line scanning from the parallel furrows on the field he was ploughing!

He spent a year at Brigham Young University, gaining a grounding in chemistry and physics, but his television ideas went far beyond anything in the curriculum. The only thing lacking was money for research. Farnsworth was extremely fortunate in having the interest and trust of two able fund raisers, Everson and Gorrell. Eventually money was raised through the Crocker Bank in California, and Farnsworth, only 20 years old and newly married, set up his television laboratory in San Francisco. Here he produced a stream of inventions and patents on electronic television, most notably the Image Dissector camera.

Elma Farnsworth was at her husband's side and she writes vividly of the early breakthroughs in electronic television. The first all-electronic image, sent in September 1927, was 'one-dimensional'. In plainer terms, it was a straight line. This fell short of the television pictures of human subjects which had been demonstrated mechanically by Baird in January 1926, but Farnsworth pressed on. A few months later he was able to send a two-dimensional silhouette (a dollar sign) and by the early 1930s he was producing full pictures with several hundred lines definition. By 1936, when Farnsworth visited the Baird Company in London, he held many of the key patents in electronic camera technology. The Baird Company, who were hard pressed in their rivalry with Marconi-EMI for the first broadcast television system in Britain, entered into a licence agreement with Farnsworth. But the timing was too late, moreover the Baird laboratories were badly damaged in the Crystal Palace Fire. The Baird system was rejected by the BBC in 1937 in favour of the Marconi-EMI system at 405 lines.

At the New York World's Fair in 1939, RCA announced the "birth of television" with no mention of Farnsworth, or Baird, or Marconi-EMI. The painful truth for RCA was that after years of bitter patent litigation, they had been compelled to pay royalties to the much smaller Farnsworth company for the use of their camera technology

The mass market for television was delayed by World War II and did not emerge until the late 1940s. This should have been the great opportunity for Farnsworth, but his company was by then in financial difficulties and it was taken over by IIT and effectively forced out of television. Farnsworth turned his attention to other technologies, including nuclear fusion. He lived to see the television pictures of the moon landing in 1969. Proudly and emotionally Farnsworth declared: "...They are using a miniature version of my Image Dissector tube." Since his death in 1971, recognition has gradually come to Farnsworth and perhaps one day his fascinating life story will be shown on television, the medium that he helped to create.

*Malcolm Baird.*

# **405-MAC: A New Approach to Compatible HDTV**

**Jeffrey Borinsky**

Exciting new developments in a leading British TV laboratory can now for the first time be revealed to readers of *405 Alive*. Although only limited details have been released to date, the implications could be very interesting for High Definition TV. For reasons of commercial security the company concerned does not wish to be named in this article. Readers will no doubt rush to remind me that 405 *is* high definition – and so it was for many years but no more. Today HDTV is usually defined as being in excess of 1000 lines, though some say 800.

Although HDTV cameras and related studio equipment are now well developed there remains the problem of transmitting the huge bandwidth to the home viewer. There are several possible methods. The Japanese were first with their 1125-line, 60Hz system. A system called MUSE (multiple sub-Nyquist encoding) was used to shoehorn the signal into a satellite TV channel. As a result, the picture quality suffered. In addition, this approach is completely non-compatible with any existing TV system.

The '50Hz countries', including all of Europe, were naturally not happy with this. 60Hz operation would be difficult due to flicker caused by 50Hz lighting, while conversion to existing standards would be difficult. With memories of the 405-625 change still fresh, a number of European countries have got together to develop a *compatible* system. Euromoney has gone into the Eureka consortium, which aims to have a 1250/625-line 50Hz system in the near future. The studio equipment is virtually identical to that used for the Japanese system. For transmission digital compression schemes have also been demonstrated but these suffer from several problems. These include total incompatibility, strange effects on some pictures and the need for unproven and very complex chips in the receivers.

The joker in the pack is 405-MAC. Based on sound historical principles, the aim is to transmit a very high quality picture in a relatively narrow channel. It is well known that if you transmit fewer lines then you need less bandwidth for the same horizontal resolution. The calculations are



not too complex but this is not a highly technical journal. As an example the original 405-line system with its 3MHz bandwidth is as good on horizontal resolution as 625 lines with a bandwidth of 5MHz.

The sceptics will say "but it's only 405 lines, with all the lines showing and a horrible loud whistle". *Even amongst 405 Alive readers?* [Editor]. Things have changed a bit since the original 405-line system was invented however. To understand how 405-MAC works you need to look at the MAC system used for 625. This was developed by IBA engineers and is used on a limited scale for satellite broadcasting. BSB intended to use it but they went bust in the process. Many readers will already know the principles of MAC so I'll give only a very brief account of what's involved.

First, colour. Each line of luminance is compressed in time to about two-thirds of its original length and occupies the last 40 $\mu$ s of the transmitted line. The two colour difference signals are compressed by a ratio of about 3:1 and are transmitted during the initial part of the line – on alternate lines. This completely avoids cross-colour effects (the lurid patterning that occurs with striped jackets etc.) since the luminance and colour signal components are never mixed.

The really important point however is that we no longer need to use the same line standard all the way through the system from camera through transmission and display. Even now we can improve existing PAL pictures by digitally converting to 1250 lines for the display. At the same time we can remove the interlacing. This gives a very peaceful picture, free of 25Hz flicker effects. The use of large scale integrated circuits makes this economic in a TV receiver.

These ideas, along with many other detail improvements, are leading the Eureka team to a *compatible family* of high quality systems. A typical arrangement might start with a programme originated in 1250-line format, then processed to squeeze it into a 625-line channel and finally converted back to 1250 lines at the receiver. The result is designed to be fitted into a standard satellite TV channel but not existing terrestrial channels.

The 405-line system was invented by EMI in the early 1930s. The crude cameras and receivers of the period meant that its full quality couldn't be exploited at the time. Brilliant members of the team that developed the system, like Alan Blumlein, were thinking of ways to conceal the line structure – just after the war synchronous spot wobble held out the promise of 819-line quality via 405-line channels. It was hoped that this would justify the British decision to stay with 405 lines while the rest of

Europe (except France) was proposing to adopt 625 lines. France, being French and thus different, chose 819 lines and so created the world's first high definition system.

The UK stayed with 405 lines and the rest is history. Or is it? The 405-line service closed some years ago but is not forgotten. Apart from readers of *405 Alive*, one leading British laboratory retained an interest in it. After all, if EMI had the ideas over 40 years ago why have they largely now been forgotten? How many times have you congratulated yourself on developing some new circuit only to hear someone say "but Blumlein invented that in 1932!"

The 405-line NTSC experiments in the 1950s never really came to anything. But the new idea is to take MAC and other modern trickery and apply it to 405 lines. Brilliant! If you do the tedious sums you discover that a 405 MAC picture fits into an ordinary 8MHz terrestrial TV channel. It has better horizontal resolution than current 625-line systems because this comes more easily with fewer lines. To make the lines disappear we use large scale chips to double the line count to 810 (suspiciously close to the French 819) or even triple it to 1215 for a really super display. Even basic 405 lines does not look bad on a good set with accurate interlacing. Bad interlacing used to plague older sets and that gave 405 lines a bad name. Raising the line number also conveniently puts the line whistle out of audible range. The RSPCA can worry about all this annoying the dogs. With these improvements we can produce a good picture even on the large, flat screens of the future.

This may sound like a confidence trick. You can't get 1215 lines worth of picture from 405 lines. Strictly speaking that's correct. But it ignores the very bad value for money we get from our lines these days. The Kell factor, named after Ray Kell, a leading American researcher of the 1930s, is about 0.6 for the present system. This means our 625 lines give us only 400 lines of real resolution. We can improve the Kell factor at the receiver by de-interlacing the picture and increasing the number of lines. But the big improvements are at the studio end.

Imagine a 810-line (or even 1215-line) camera without interlacing. This has a good Kell factor, typically better than 0.9. All recording and processing are done at 810 or 1215 lines to preserve quality. One day when wider channels may become available we may be able to transmit this full signal. For now we have to convert it down to fit a 405 line channel – a little quality is lost, especially with moving objects. The down-converter is at the transmitter and can thus be quite complex and expensive so that a good job is done. It also produces a DATV

(digitally assisted TV) signal. DATV was invented by BBC engineers and is transmitted during spare parts of the TV waveform. The DATV signal tells the receiver how to convert the signal back to 810 lines in the best possible way. The receiver is told which bits of the picture are moving, and in what direction. This allows fairly simple circuits at the receiver to perform a really first class conversion from 405 to 810 lines.

It's not quite as good as 810 lines all the way from the studio to the domestic TV receiver, but demonstrations I've seen show that very little is lost.

Will 405-MAC make it as the system of the future? Despite its obvious advantages, its chances are not good. Not many 405-line sets remain to take advantage of the compatibility. Powerful political and economic interests are backing other HDTV contenders. It will probably end up as another great British invention consigned to the scrapheap. If we'd stuck to 405 lines, the French to 819, and we'd persuaded the rest of Europe to accept our lead, perhaps the UK would have been left with more than just a pale shadow of its TV industry. (Document ref: JB1496.)

**And now for something, well, completely different. Never let it be said you don't get variety for your money in this magazine!**

## **YES, IT'S NUMBER ONE...**

by Steve James

Of late there has been no shortage of articles about BBC1's *Top Of The Pops*, as the programme has just recently passed its thirtieth birthday. The aim of this one you're reading is to look more closely at those formative years, with particular reference to details that are often overlooked – changing theme music, title sequences and sets. Vintage pop enthusiasts have been lucky in recent years in being able to see old TOTP clips crop up in everything from throwaway glimpses in programmes such as *Telly Addicts* to careful archive presentations in *Sounds Of The Sixties/Seventies*. Using these, it's fun trying to assess just what is left in the archives of the BBC.

As most people must by now know, *Top Of The Pops* was first transmitted on New Year's Day 1964, the first of a planned run of six programmes commissioned by the then Head of Variety, Bill Cotton. The somewhat brief nature of this first series belied the BBC's subdued confidence on the show's revolutionary chart-based format. Much of the early success can be attributed to the dedication and enthusiasm of producer Johnnie Stewart, previously associated with programmes such as *The Trad Fad*. With TOTP,



however, he had a chance to produce a programme that reflected the changing music scene and moved with it. A perfect formula in theory – and from the outset, Johnnie Stewart knew he was on to a winner.

It was not all plain sailing to begin with. For a start, the show was to be based at one of the BBC's under-used regional studios at Manchester – rather a long step from London, which as always was considered the heart of the British entertainment industry. A bizarre aspect of TOTP's first home was the fact that it was a converted church: an ideal environment in which to pray from the production gallery that the rather old studio gear would not break down! Despite the odds being tipped against it, the first programme proceeded without disaster, and Jimmy Savile introduced the debut artist from his rather stylish DJ desk.

His record-spinning assistant was a girl called Denise Sampey, who lasted only a few weeks before being replaced by the famed Samantha Juste. Of course the record decks on the desk were fakes and in fact were a simple way of cueing the relevant tape to run in the gallery, whilst the camera cut the miming singer or group. Also on the desk were two smart KB 17" transportable TV sets, one at each end, to give things a sufficiently 'technical' look. Behind this magnificent plywood peninsula was a large Top Twenty listing.

At the top for the first show were, of course, The Beatles with *I Want To Hold Your Hand* – not by any means their only chart showing that week! The line up for show No 1 was, in the studio, The Rolling Stones, Dusty Springfield, The Dave Clark Five, The Hollies and The Swinging Blue Jeans, whilst filmed inserts came from Cliff Richard, Freddie & The Dreamers and the aforementioned Fab Four. Almost needless to say, this first show is no longer with us. But several clips from 1964 have turned up since; The Supremes' October '64 hit *Baby Love* and the Dave Clark Five's *Bits & Pieces* have both turned up several times as very dirty telerecordings, although have been seen recently looking much cleaner. It would seem a little film restoration has gone on somewhere. Whether these clips come from a complete surviving programme or programmes is anyone's guess.

More excitingly, some moments from 1965 exist on videotape – Jonathan Kings' *Everyone's Gone To The Moon*, Herman's Hermits' *Just A Little Bit Better*, Sonny & Cher's *I Got You Babe* and The Byrds' *All I Really Wanna Do* have all appeared on programmes over the last few years. In fact Jonathan King and Sonny & Cher (the latter shown on the recent TOTP 30th Birthday Show) have been aired with Jimmy Savile's introductions complete! The fact that all this material dates from around September 1965 suggests that perhaps this is all from a surviving complete show. If so, it deserves to be shown complete, as the quality looks excellent.

Other survivors from this period (on telerecordings) include The Moody Blues' *Go Now* and Manfred Mann's *Come Tomorrow*, both aired on *Sounds*

*Of The Sixties*. One of the most interesting escapees from the skip from 1965 is Sandie Shaw captured at a TOTP rehearsal, performing *Long Live Love* and shown on SOTS. The cameras occasionally show bits of the studio floor – empty then, but soon to be filled with excited teenagers. Also to be seen is one Pete Murray, wandering around and looking thoughtful in his cardigan. No doubt the ironic thing here is that the show's actual transmission is probably long gone!

Part of the set at this stage (no pun intended!) was a large arrangement of concentric circles of light bulbs which flashed impressively in the background. This can also be seen in action behind the Rolling Stones, performing *Get Off of My Cloud*, once again, aired on SOTS. It would be nice to see some opening titles from this era – if any are left of course. The opening music was simply referred to as *Percussion Piece*, written by Johnnie Stewart and performed in 1964 by Bob Midgly, and again in 1965 by an anonymous five-piece group. It was revamped yet again in 1969 by the 'Top Of The Pops Orchestra' before finally calling it a day in 1970.

We'll have to skip 1966. It seems that's where the BBC put any recordings of that year's output! Perhaps all that's left are the still photos of stars on the programme, carefully filed by the BBC photo library. 1967, for some reason, seems to have fared much better. The end of the year compilation telerecorded show was shown a couple of years back on Channel 4's generous BBC tribute evening. The same footage of some of the groups was seen again in *Sounds Of The Sixties*, supplemented by other new clips. A rare clip of the Go-Jos (the predecessors of Pan's People) in action was seen on *Digging The Dancing Qucens*, BBC1's recent tribute to the latter dancing troupe. DJ on that clip was Alan Freeman, and the record the girls danced to was *Reflections* by Diana Ross & The Supremes.

The show reached its 200th edition on November 9th 1967. Here's the line-up: in the studio were The Dave Clark Five, Val Doonican, The Kinks, Gene Pitney and The Foundations, whilst on film were Donovan, The Who and DDDBM&T. DeeJay Jimmy Savile nattered to Lulu, Simon Dee, Scott Walker and others, as special guests. Opening titles at this time consisted of shots of records being pressed in a production plant, interspersed with a count-down in stylised graphics, culminating in the Top Of The Pops logo and the excited announcement "Yes it's Number One – It's TOP OF THE POPS!".

1968 saw the first appearance of Pan's People, dancing to Tommy James' hit *Mony Mony* and upsetting Mary Whitehouse with their jiggling and their tin-foil and PVC costumes. Again, quite a decent number of 1968 clips have turned up, mostly on the superb *Sounds Of The Sixties*, some with deeJay links intact. Apart from Jimmy Savile, we were also able to see Dave Cash in action. He was then amongst the ranks of the Wonderful Radio One DJs, along with tearaways like Bob Holness and Mr Terence Wogan.

Despite this period being the era of flower power and psychedelic colour, TOTP was still in black and white of course, as colour was only available on BBC2. It would have been no use switching the Pops onto the second channel as the majority of people watched on 405 lines; in fact even dual-standard black and white sets probably didn't hold enough of a majority to avoid depriving a great many people of their weekly dose of TOTP if it was put out on 625-line BBC2. (If you really wanted to see pasty-faced musicians in all their glory, you would have had to stay up for BBC2's *Late Night Line Up* segment *Colour Me Pop!*).

If anyone can say for definite when *Top Of The Pops* had its first colour edition, I would be very interested to know! One would assume that November 1969 would be correct – in which case, the first colour No. 1 would have been *Sugar Sugar* by cartoon group The Archies! Some clips of '69 TOTP surfaced on *Sounds Of The Sixties* – The Hollies' *Sorry Suzanne* and Cilla Black's *Surround Yourself With Sorrow* spring to mind. Both are b&w telerecordings – and with reference to Anthony Goodman's letter in *405 Alive* Issue 20, perhaps by now sourced at 625 lines?

The BBC transmitted several other pop shows in 1969; some one-offs, *How It Is* and *Monster Music Mash* (both surviving on VT) turned up on *Sounds Of The Sixties*, as did the end-of-the-year and end-of-the-decade *Pop Co The Sixties*, a colour special, presented by J Savile Esq. and featuring some of the past ten years' big names. Everyone from Adam Faith to The Kinks. Indeed one clip shown on SOTS throws things into some confusion: The Rolling Stones were shown in colour twice, once performing *Honky Tonk Women* and once *Gimme Shelter*. Although both clips are obviously from the same session, SOTS credits one to *Top Of The Pops*, the other to *Pop Go The Sixties* – on-screen evidence as to which show it was, is minimal, so who knows? Who cares? Is anybody still reading this ?!

Friend and fellow enthusiast Pat Hildred was lucky enough to come across a domestic audio recording of TOTP. Number one that week was Zaeger & Evans' *In The Year 2525*, dating it to approx. Aug/Sept. 1969. DJ on that occasion was Tony Blackburn. There was an interesting and short-lived format change at this time. The show opens with a short fanfare and the "Yes, it's Number One..." announcement, before playing a quick burst of the number one record, which is played in full at the end of the show. What on-screen titles went with all this is anybody's guess!

1970. Colour! Well, yes and no! Shows were certainly transmitted in colour, but it would seem some were stored as b&w telerecordings! Why? [Probably for reasons of economy or it may be that only b&w telerecordings intended for overseas sale to countries with b&w television have survived. *Editor*] This is borne out by sightings of cameras with 'BBCtv COLOUR' badges seen skulking about in some recently seen clips. Apparently some shows *do* exist in colour VT, but without the DJ links! Bizarre isn't the word. Some wonderful titles exist from 1970 and were shown at the start of that



year's *TV Heaven* in 1992 on Channel 4. Again, they were shown as a b&w telerecording and consisted of shots of flowing lava, optical distortions of the TOTP logo and Pan's People dancing, all cut together with dramatic effect. The "Yes it's Number One" announcement is still there at that stage, now complemented by a cartoon of Jimmy Savile miming the words! The music was still an up-beat orchestral piece, although a different tune to *Percussion Piece*.

I'm sure at least one complete edition exists from January 1970. From recently shown clips we have witnessed Jethro Tull's *Witch's Promise*, The Temptations' *I Can't Get Next To You*, Jonathan King's *Let It All Hang Out*, Edison Lighthouse' *Love Grows* and the Pan's People performance of Mary Hopkin's *Temma Harbour*. All these charted in January 1970! Interestingly the Jethro Tull performance exists both as colour VT and b&w telerecording! The former was used on *Sounds Of The Seventies*, although the DJ announcement was Jimmy Savile on the b&w telerecording! Confused?

One eye-catching gimmick used at this time was superimposing the presenter on a background of spinning shapes – with hypnotising effects! Evidence of this can be seen twice on *Sounds Of The Seventies*, once as mentioned on the Jethro Tull Clip and again with Tony Blackburn on The Temptations clip. The spinning patterns can also be seen briefly at the end of the Picketty Witch hit *The Same Old Feeling*, featured on the sell-through video *25 Years Of TOTP, Vol 2*. Must have been stunning in colour!

Other 1970 acts to savour on *Sounds Of The Seventies* include Free's *Alright Now*, Deep Purple with *Black Night*, whilst on the mid 1980s series *The Rock & Roll Years* there was a clip of Badfinger on TOTP with their 1970 hit *Come and Get It*. All these were colour VT performances. The TOTP interior was an interesting place at this time: There were various sets of vertical metallic bars (*à la* Slade Prison) behind which people danced, also enormous cut outs of giant spacemen (the moon landing of 1969 still being fresh in the mind) and other figures. There were also rather odd paintings of flowers and enormous insects to be seen behind some acts. This was very much the era of male members of the audience being attired in florid shirts and neck-ties, whilst the girls chose mini or maxi skirts and white knee boots. The Pickettywitch telerecording I mentioned has a shot of a girl wearing a tee shirt bearing the slogan *TS WAY IN!*

1970 was also the year that the Monty Python team borrowed part of the TOTP set, as part of their 'How Not To Be Seen Sketch'. In this, a 'group' supposedly hiding in packing crates and coffins 'perform' a current song. Michael Palin announces: "And now with their latest hit *Yummy Yummy Yummy*, here are Jackie Charlton & The Toenails!". As the song (actually a hit for bubblegum group Ohio Express) plays, the cameras pan round the assembled packing cases, doing the occasional in-and-out zoom, as the

lights flash to the music. The cases even have microphones in front of them!

And now for something completely different... 1971! This was year that the famous *Whole Lotto Love* theme tune was adopted. The song was recorded originally by Led Zeppelin (who ironically were one of the few groups that refused to appear on the show). The TOTP version was the splendidly heavy-handed version by a group called CCS (which stood, incidentally for Collective Consciousness Society). To go with the dramatic theme were a stunning set of colour titles – amazing electronic 'explosions', colour negatives of girl's faces, oscilloscope traces leaping to the music. SUPERB! This was finally seen in all its glory, at last, when UK Gold ran their season of complete vintage TOTP shows. Perhaps 'complete' is not the word for this August 1971 edition, as it is one of those with DJ links missing! Jimmy Savile is in fact seen in the opening audience shots, dancing with a hanky over his face, next to a girl sporting a 'BBCtv SUMMER COLOUR' tee shirt! No. 1 on this occasion was held by Middle of The Road with *Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep*. Watching this edition, the excitement of that still almost experimental 'early-colour' feel is very strong. Perhaps much of the excitement was keeping an eye on the 1968 GEC dual-standard colour set I was watching it on, for puffs of smoke from the back!

Apparently there are *no* complete shows from 1972 left. However, perhaps at least part of the 1972 Christmas Show is there, as The Jackson Five's performance of *Rockin' Robin* has been shown several times recently

At the end of 1973, Jimmy Savile was joined by Samantha Juste to celebrate 10 years of Top Popping amid various archive clips and the usual studio acts The '73 titles, seen on *Telly Addicts* in 1990, were a little disappointing compared to 1971's psychedelic pyrotechnics. The established CCS theme was backed with film images of neon lights and pinball machines, ending with a rather gaudy 30-to-1 countdown in cartoon style numbers, wobbled and distorted with video wizardry. From 1974 onwards the presentation became more or less established and fewer changes were evident. What a shame that now TOTP is such a 'grown up' animal, careless (to say the least!) archiving has robbed us of so much of the programme's exciting formative years. Still, we should be thankful for what we've seen so far – but a run of those surviving complete early shows would be real 'Television Heaven', so come on BBC, how about it?

# TV ON RADIO

*Ron Ham*

It's virtually every television collector's dream to find a pre-war set but sadly the opportunities for achieving this are few and far between nowadays. But a near-substitute is often overlooked, which is just as authentic and far easier to realise. Ron Ham explained in the August 1995 issue of *Practical Wireless*. It appears that these sets are not desperately rare or expensive; several manufacturers produced them, not just the firms mentioned by Ron. You might care to look out for one... pay attention to the markings on the dial of the next old radio you see! [AE]

## Television Sound

I want to tell you about two of the broadcast receivers which received TV sound. They were built in the late 1930s. The radio receivers included the television sound channel, 41.5MHz, among their special features. I was reminded about these sets by Tony Hopwood (Upton-on-Severn) who found a Pilot U106 in a second-hand shop. It has six-wavebands, eight valves, including a 'magic eye' and a rectifier. The designer certainly had long-distance listening in mind! Three of the bands are the short wave 12-30, 26-70 and 65-195metre broadcasting bands. The other bands covered are: 750-2200m long wave, 190-550 metres medium-wave and 4.5-115m (I quote) "Ultra Short Waves". A write-up in the *Broadcaster Service Man's Manual* (July 1938) says of the USW band: "Television sound received with reasonable strength at about 15 miles. No undue drift, although retuning was occasionally necessary". A drawing of the chassis layout shows the provision for a dipole as well as a long-wire antenna.

## Alexandra Palace

The BBC began a regular television service from London's Alexandra Palace, on 45MHz (41.5MHz sound), in November 1936. But because of the Second World War, it ended in September 1939. Television was a new and exciting field of entertainment but, the receivers were expensive. And the reception range was limited to between 40 and 60 miles. However, returning to the special receiver it's interesting to note that apart from the UX based magic eye', the Pilot uses International Octal valves types, 6U7, 6B8, 6L7, 6J7, 6Q7 and 6N6. A similar set, the Marconiphone 561, employs the Marconi range of octal valves types W63, X64, Z63, D63 and KT63. Both are handsome looking table models with polished wooden cabinets and once had a price tag around £25. According to the *Broadcaster Service Man's Manual* (January 1936) the Marconiphone's "Ultra Short Wave" coverage was 4.85-12m and the TV sound was receivable at about 30 miles. An article in *Television and Short Wave World* (June 1938) refers to the "exceptional quality" of the Alexandra Palace sound channel. It explains that "owing to the wide band width available with this sound



transmitter, all musical frequencies are radiated with very little distortion or attenuation". Both sets I've mentioned have large loud-speakers. They also include adequate tone controls and a pair of output valves to provide good quality sound reproduction.

## INTERNET INTERLUDE

A selection of items seen in Cyberspace (ugh!)

**Date:** Sun, 30 Jul 1995 16:31:31 -0700 (PDT)  
**From:** roy547@netcom.com (Roy Trumbull)  
**To:** old.time.radio@airwaves.com  
**Subject:** SOF AND OTHER STUFF

In the early days of TV the Kinescope was sometimes shot by reversing the image to produce a negative. Then when the film was shown, the polarity was again reversed at the Iconoscope pickup tube. This bit of trickery produced much better contrast. This technique was the product of research by William Palmer in San Francisco.

One of my jobs 30 years ago was to sit in a control room at KNBR waiting for David Wayne to give a commercial cue on Weekend Monitor so that I could cover it with a different commercial for the northwest. Most Saturdays his batting average wasn't too good. One cue was for a 30 and the other was for a 60 so when he blew it we either covered 30 seconds of the show or had 30 seconds of silence.

Today shooting location sound for film is often done with a Nagra recorder. A tach signal is produced by the camera and recorded on a track at right angle to the normal track. Matching the image and sound is known as resolving.

*Someone asked me about the value of Philco Predictas recently... I cannot remember who, but this snippet from the Internet sums it up neatly (unless you know better!). The Predicta is the TV set that all American collectors feel they must have in their collection, so it has the same status there as the Bush TV 22 does here, although it is a more modern set. [Editor]*

I know of a floor model (i.e.. on a pedestal) Philco Predicta TV that is for sale. It does work but has some scratches on the plastic tube covering. The guy wants \$900 for it. About \$500 seems more reasonable to me. Does anyone know how rare these floor models are?? Thank you, Mark Allbaugh [allbaugh@mindspring.com](mailto:allbaugh@mindspring.com)

It does depend on which floor model it is. The more common floor model Predicta is commonly referred to as the 'Barber Pole' model. This model has a series of horizontal ribs in the front and the back side of the pedestal is curved. This model came in both blonde and walnut. It has a 21" screen which is identical to the 21" table model. This version should be priced in the \$400.-\$500. range.

Then there is the 'Danish Modern' Predicta floor model. This I believe is the rarest of the Predicta models, along with the 17" table model in original red. The Danish modern floor model has a vertical rectangular pedestal and a series of legs

emanating from each corner of the pedestal and providing support for the unit down to the floor. It also has the same picture tube unit as the 21" table model. I have only seen this model in walnut. This is a very difficult set to find and if it is really clean it is well worth \$900.

I hope you find this information useful. Steven Caiati  
e-mail rcalato@aol.com voicelfax: 718 232 0889

In article <486cfl\$6bg@firehose.mindspring.com>, slob@mindspring.com says...

I could swear that TVs when I was a kid (early 60s) were sort of 'black and blue', not black and white. What kind of phosphor was used? When did this change? Are picture tubes for old TVs with the 'correct' phosphor still available?

Black & white TV picture tubes have always used a P4 phosphor, which does indeed glow with kind of a bluish white. By now, you are probably used to watching black & white programming on a color TV, and how a color TV displays a b/w image is dependant on the adjustment of the color balance, screen controls, and other factors. It is actually harder for a color TV to display a good B & W picture than it is a color picture, the gun balance, video balance, color tracking, and screen adjustments have to be right on the money. But still, I can adjust a color TV to display a slightly warm b/w picture (sort of brown tint) or cool picture (more of a bluish tint). I prefer a slightly warm picture, so I set them up to display a slightly brownish black. But, of course, on a black & white TV, the warmth of the picture is fixed by the phosphor. I don't think B & W phosphor has changed over the years, just perhaps our perception of what a B & W image looks like. As for replacement tubes for old TVs, for many of them you may be stuck with getting your tube rebuilt. When I was in the TV business, there was a fellow in a nearby town that had picture tube rebuilding equipment right in his shop. I had him rebuild several tubes for me, both B & W and color, and was pleased with the results. This works fine, as long as the screen isn't burnt. Perhaps you can find someone nearby who does this. Tom Sullivan tsullivan@serv2.fwi.comha

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 1995 09:06:40 -0500  
From: Bruce Rudesill <lranger@TSO.Cin.IX.net>  
To: otr@airwaves.com  
Subject: The Lone Ranger

Since Randy Minnehan asked.....

The best source for information regarding The Lone Ranger is David Rothel's 1976 book, "Who Was That Masked Man". Rothel interviewed a number of WXYZ personnel for his book. Another book is "The Story of the Lone Ranger" by James Van Hise. This latter book deals more with the Ranger's film and TV incarnations.

Also it should be said that Fran Striker did NOT create the Lone Ranger. All the basic premises of the show were thought out and decided at WXYZ before Striker ever wrote a script. Striker evidently had much to do with fleshing out the Legend of the Lone Ranger though.

How the show came to be and who thought of what are things that are lost in the mists of time now. There's the George W. Trendle version and the Jim Jewell version and various anecdotal stories told by others who were there at the time. Just about all of them are dead now. We will never know for sure. We can but enjoy the legacy they have left us.

Just to set another record straight. Years before Tonto came upon the tragedy at Bryant's Gap, his own life was saved by none other than the boy who would grow up to be The Lone Ranger. I think turn-about is fair play. And there are worse things to do with one's life than devoting to the cause of justice for all.

**Subject: Boss Cat**

**>"Top Cat .... was renamed Boss Cat when shown on BBC television."**

I think it was interesting why BBC decided to resurrect the program (this was in the early 80's I believe). The new BBC 4 [???], always looking for offbeat innovative programs picked up the old *Bilko* series (You'll Never Get Rich) and it was a big hit, especially with young adults. The series spawned fan clubs, t-shirts, etc. Somebody then noticed that *Top Cat* was a salute or parody of the show and it was a natural bringing it to the UK market as well.

How many of the Hanna-Barbera characters got their inspiration from noted comedians! Huckleberry Hound was Andy Griffith, Yogi Bear was Art Carney, Doggy Daddy was Jimmy Durante, the Flintstones were originally very much like the Honeymooners (and I remember reading that they re-did the pilot to make them less like the HM to avoid a lawsuit). *Shawn Fulper-Smith*

**Subject: American shows renamed in Britain**

Why was the American western programme *Guns smoke* renamed *Gun Law* in the UK? Well, this may or may not apply re the question about the UK title of the *Guns smoke* series, but I can tell you that for quite a few years *Guns smoke* lived in the form of a hugely successful UK newspaper comic strip that was quite explicitly derived from the American television production (as in: the Matt Dillon of the Brit comic strip looked exactly like James Arness). There was some kind of international copyright situation that specifically precluded the usage of the word "guns smoke," and the long-running newspaper feature was titled GUN LAW. Therefore I would speculate that the American TV export was perhaps also retitled *Gun Law* for the UK market.

*Jay Maeder.*

I recently stripped an old military airborne camera (WWII vintage, I think). Included in the stuff I saved is a wild and woolly looking tube---an RCA type 1846 iconoscope, used for scanning the image. The image screen in the tube is about 4 1/2 " in diameter. Electron gun sticks out at an angle and is about 6 " long.

If there is a tube buff out there who would like to have this most unusual tube, make me an offer I can't refuse and it is yours. I would bet it would work if it were fired up! Joe [wjoew@aol.com](mailto:wjoew@aol.com)

Aaaaaaargh!



**Subj: Sight for Sore Eyes**

I just had to tell you all about the rather interesting sight I came across while driving through town this morning.

On the outside porch of a house were literally dozens of gorgeous old console radios and televisions! I had no idea that so many old TVs were still around. Anyway, I had to stop and see what the deal was here.

Turns out that the person collects them, and he has a house filled (and I mean \*filled\*!) with old clocks, radios, and TVs. I'm not familiar with the equipment enough to recognise rarities, but I was overwhelmed by what this guy had! He could hardly move inside that house!

He told me he was paring down his collection, and that if I dropped by tomorrow he would let me have first crack at what he's getting rid of. Amazing.

Oh, I saw this utterly fantastic-looking black bakelite portable TV by Admiral, and he had many TVs with the round screens. Sarah

**From: Fraser McAninch <fraser@interlog.com>**  
**Newsgroups: rec.antiques.radio+phono**  
**Subject: MZTV Museum of Television - more info**  
**Date: 10 Dec 1995 00:55:27 GMT**

I hope everyone will visit the show "Watching TV: Historic Televisions and Memorabilia from the MZTV Museum." This is the first public show for the MZTV Museum, a non-profit private museum open by appointment to scholars and collectors at 151 John St Suite 401 in Toronto. The show is co-organized with the Royal Ontario Museum's Institute of Contemporary Culture, and will run until September 15, 1996. In addition to 60 historic sets, tracing the technical development of television, there is memorabilia ranging from an early stock certificate from John Logie Baird's company, to postwar toys, games, and spin offs from television.

The catalogue lays out the rationale for the show in an article called "Opening the Doors of Reception" which tells the story of North American TV and includes timelines and numerous visuals. Please do visit our WEB site, at [www.mztv.com/mztv/](http://www.mztv.com/mztv/) We will be refreshing the site, with the help of our partners at CityInteractive and opening new virtual galleries every six weeks or so. Comments on the show, on the site, and generally about the popular story of how television became part of Canadian and American culture always welcome.

*Liss Jeffrey, Acting Director, MZTV Museum.*

**From: schoo@fnal.gov (Dans Cockatoo Ranch)**  
**Newsgroups: rec.antiques.radio+phono**  
**Subject: Re: Horizontal resolution**  
**Date: 12 Dec 1995 22:34:44 GMT**

In article <mwhite-1212951439260001@ml4494-mac.mitre.org>

mwhite@mitre.org (Michael White) writes:

>SCOTTPAUL wrote:

>> Well, 500 lines may be good for a TV set, but it's wretched for a computer  
>> monitor.

>

>Ummm... isn't that 500 lines per inch?

This is getting way off topic but I think it's time to put it to rest. That's 500 lines period. There are only so many horizontal scan lines per frame regardless of the screen size. The number of scan lines defines the vertical resolution. The horizontal resolution is what is being discussed. This relates to the total number of vertical lines that can be displayed across the screen regardless of screen size. If the screen is one inch wide and has 500 lines of horizontal resolution that translates to 500 lines per inch. If the screen is the typical 10.5 inches on a monitor measured from left side to right side, a 500 line resolution gives 47.62 lines per inch. This is why a large screen can have the capability of displaying a better resolution than a small one given everything else equal. The actual lines per inch restraint is less for a bigger screen.

This is a very simplistic way to describe it and the actual horizontal resolution is specified by a more complex method but this will suffice to explain the concept. Lines or dots per inch only applies to printers and this is because there is no standard scan rate or frame size for the printed page like there is for video. Phosphor dot pitch on a CRT relates to the number of color trios per inch on the CRT face and is therefore loosely related to horizontal resolution but there are other factors beyond dot pitch to limit resolution.

500 lines of horizontal resolution is pretty good for television but substandard for a quality computer monitor. Trinitrons are quite capable of doing either.

Daniel Schoo	U
Electronics Design Engineer	( o o )
Fermilab, Batavia, Illinois, USA	( o o )
Dan's Cockatoo Ranch	.....m.m.....
	uuu

I'm seeking tapes of American shows from the 60s and those seem to be in short supply (except for some sit/coms).

Yes, I suspect it's because the US copyright laws changed some time in the mid-1960s. I cannot tell you exactly when and how (the article I tore out of a trade magazine is buried in one of six large plastic tubs of unfiled papers!) but up until that time there was no automatic copyright on films and television programmes and even after that, copyright had to be renewed which is why you have so many people selling 'public domain' material in the USA. [Our British copyright is different and automatic; we have no public domain films here and importing a public domain film from the States to sell over here would be illegal.]

Anyway, programmes made after this date are copyright and it would be legally foolish for anyone to sell videotapes of these programmes (unless they have licensed the material from the copyright owner).

**Re: Why do so many programmes survive from the 1950s and so little afterwards?**

Someone raised the question about why it is relatively easier to find shows from the 50s than from later decades. While copyright may be a factor, I doubt it, as a lot of "dealers" really don't seem to care about legalities and skirt around the copyright issue.

Instead, submitted for your approval, is my theory that it has to do more with the technologies of the time. In the 50s, networks didn't have the distribution technology that they do today, making it necessary to ship a large number of prints around the country. On the Mickey Mouse Club, for example, they used over 50 prints of each show, which were sent to the actual stations that aired them (and which were then sent to other stations who aired it later). Later use of cable and microwave technology meant that the networks could distribute films from a central site. ABC, for example, in the 70s at least, used one print in New York City and a second print running simultaneously at the transmission site in New Jersey (lose NYC, switch right over to the other). As a result, all they needed was two prints. So, what do you think has the greatest chance of both surviving and making it to the collector market - something with 50 prints or another with two?

Anyway, that's my theory. Comments? Bill [wcotter@delphi.com](mailto:wcotter@delphi.com)

**From: edellers@shivasys.com (Ed Ellers)**  
**Subject: Vintage Sony**

In article <49ioag\$3gb@news.eecs.nwu.edu>, [flasch@news.eecs.nwu.edu](mailto:flasch@news.eecs.nwu.edu) says...

>I used to repair TVs for a living. I remember these quite well because they had a  
>little figure of a Sony Boy etched on the printed circuit board. He was waving.  
>Kind of cute. I'll bet they are rare now. The picture tubes had a tendency to go  
>soft with time.

That model -- known in the U.S. as the 8-301 -- may have been the only one with the Sony Boy on the board; my 5-303 doesn't have that at all. (I'm guessing that the Japanese versions were 8-300 and 5-302 respectively.) I'll have to take another look at my old Tape recorder 464, the only other Sony product I have that is anywhere near that old, to see if he's lurking on its board!

Since the 8" was the first TV Sony sold, if they made their own CRTs it's possible that they didn't exactly know how yet. Still not as big a PR disaster as their first Chromatron color TV, which came out in 1964 (in Japan only) and was recalled in 1965; they don't talk about that one much. (It was a 19" set with a tube-type chassis, and they had power regulation problems.) Fortunately for all concerned, they pressed on regardless and came up with the Trinitron a few years later.

**From A.W.R.Gulliver@herts.ac.uk**  
**==No Subject==**



**I have a B&W 1/2" open reel VTR and I want to know \*exactly\* what it is. Shibaden was the only 1/2" format I had heard of. Now I suspect my machine is EIAJ. A very similar looking machine appears in the 1967 film 'Quatermass And The Pit'.**

The first generation of Japanese 1/2" machines each used their own format and used what is termed *low-density* tape. Manufacturers include Philips LDL (this was European!), Rank-Nivico KU800, Sony CV-2000, Sony CV-2100 and Shibaden. Tapes recorded on one manufacturer's format could not be replayed on another, and following user pressure, manufacturers belonging to the Electronics Industry Association of Japan (EIAJ) agreed to establish a single recording format (EIAJ-1) which they would all follow. This format also exploited the new high density tape technology which presumably gave better pictures. Manufacturers of EIAJ machines include Hitachi, National, Sony and Sanyo.

All this was for black and white recording. Later on the EIAJ established an EIAJ standard for colour, which was also adopted by Japanese manufacturers. National (i.e. Matsushita, now branded as Panasonic) also made a 1/2" cartridge recorder; this conformed to the EIAJ colour standard and cartridge tapes can be played on any EIAJ colour machine once unwound from their cartridge.

Chief non-conformants in this era (the 1970s) were Akai, which used 1/4" tape for colour recording and Ikegami who used a 2/3" tape width system.

By the mid-1970s these formats were rendered obsolescent by cassette systems developed by Sony (U-Matic, 3/4", for industrial use and Betamax, 1/2" for domestic use), by JVC (VHS, 1/2", for domestic use) and by Philips (VCR, 1/2", for domestic and industrial use). All these were colour systems.

Although the old open reel systems were now nominally obsolete, the machines were built like the proverbial brick outhouse and many still give excellent results. The only real failure of these machines was the original Sony CV-2000, which had no skew or tracking control. This meant it could only replay with 100 per cent accuracy its own tapes, not those made on other machines. It was also a 405-line machine, although you could in fact use it for 625 line recordings. The CV-2000 along with its accessories is now a collector's item and in fact all early video recorders are collectible. *Andy Emmerson.*

**Subj: Museum of Television and Radio in New York**

The URL for the Museum of Television and Radio in New York is:

<http://www.mtr.org/>

This is a 'library' museum. You go through computer listings of TV shows, either by name, or by category. You fill out requests for specific shows (they limit you to five each request). Then when they fill your request, you get an access code to a VCR on another floor of the museum and can view your shows on a small TV screen with headsets. It's really neat. So this is another place where a home page wouldn't necessarily eliminate the need to go to the museum (well, until we get super duper video capabilities on PCs). *Renee Schwager, rschwagr@capcon.net*

**Subj: In the urban folklore of the UK have you had people report seeing transmissions from long-gone stations? (Roy Trumbull)**

Yes, there was a big to-do about thirty years ago when some London 'inventor' invited the press to view what he called live television from the USA. He herded the press into a room where they saw, on standard British 405-line TVs, not 525-line ones mark you!, station IDs from a number of American TV stations. It earned him some fame at the time from a rather uncritical public.

Afterwards someone noted that one of the stations apparently coming in over the airwaves was (I forget the call letters but it was called 'The Eyes of Texas' or something similar) and this station had been off the air for two years before his claimed reception. A technical journalist was all ready to denounce this man a few years ago as a hoaxer but got worried at the last moment in case he was still alive and sued for libel.

I'm pretty certain I have cracked the story anyway. In the early 1950s there were a lot of USA magazines circulating in the UK and one of them (I forget the reference but I have the issue, about March 1950 or 51) published a two-page spread of American TV station ID photographs. By an amazing coincidence, all the stations that this inventor "received over the air" were ones in this photo spread. Clearly he had just rigged up a camera and a closed circuit TV system and duped the reporters in that way! Clever in a way.

A couple of years ago one of our dumber papers told the story of an old TV which only received old programmes from the 1950s (but the ones they described in the article) were *all* ones which had been repeated on TV in the last few years. Some press men are very gullible, it would appear. And I'm a journalist too, but a very cynical one!!!! *Andy Emmerson*

### **Subj: TV Themes Web Site**

Patrick Kenny from the Univ of Michigan has moved his 'TV Themes' web site. He's now located on the I-Net home of the company that produces those TV Themes records. It's much quicker/faster than his old web site. Patrick's new I-Net site is:

<http://www.tvtrecords.com/tvbytes/tvthemes.html>

And you may also want to add a pointer on your web browser for:

<http://www.tvtrecords.com>

### **Subj: Jack Benny Show**

> In watching the Jack Benny special I was reminded that at least the first few  
> seasons of his TV show were unusual in that there were no cameras on the stage.  
> All the shots were done from the rear of the house using telephoto lenses. That is  
> hard because any tiny motion of the camera makes for a huge motion in the  
> image. Jack didn't want to be blocked from the audience by the cameras. I'm not  
> sure if that went on for the entire run of the show.

This wasn't that unusual. It was common for all TV stage shows to place the camera out around the 35th row, leaving the audience to see the entire stage on screen at all times. I'm not sure whether the others ever used telephoto lenses, but the idea at the time was to let the TV audience see the whole stage, just as the studio audience saw it (only much smaller). In 1948, Milton Berle's Texaco Star Theatre started the idea of putting the camera on the stage, letting the TV audience see a

much closer view of the performers than even a front row seat would afford. That worked so well that it eventually became standard. However, when Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town* premiered later, it started with the camera out at the 35th row again for several weeks.

I assume that by using telephoto lenses, Jack was trying to have the best of both worlds. Incidentally, this is the normal way of covering local town meetings on cable TV, and it seems to work well for that purpose. *A. Joseph Ross.*

Early TV auditorium studios were converted theatres and there might not be room left for an audience if all the stage were expanded to make room for the cameras. Often ramps were built out into the auditorium or, as noted, cameras placed on platforms. When Jack Benny was planning his first TV shows someone from CBS tried to quell his unease by promising to get him the best TV cameraman in Hollywood. "I don't care how good he is," Jack replied in his inimitable way, "just as long as he isn't too fat. I don't want to see him." *Bill Jaker.*

### **Subj: Antique TVs**

**Could anyone please tell me the availability and prices on real old sets?**

FRANCE: Used the 441-line system until 1956 but few if any new sets made in the last few years. Looking at the vintage radio magazines, about one (post-war) set a year comes on the market, quite pricey. 819-line transmissions continued until the early 1980s, I believe, and dual-standard 819/625 line sets are not hard to find on the Paris flea markets.

NETHERLANDS/BELGIUM. No public television service pre-war. Early post-war sets (Philips) are hard to find, no real price guide lines.

GERMANY. Pre-war television services was on 441 lines. No sets known in private ownership at all. Earlier mechanical (pre-electronic system) sets turn up about one every five years and go for astronomical prices. Early post-war sets (625 lines) hard to find, especially the ones made in east Germany, some of which were exported to the USSR.

BRITAIN. Electronic television started here in 1936, on 405 lines. About 20,000 sets were made pre-war and quite a few (probably 200 or so) survive. About five come onto the market each year, selling for between £700 and £2500 according to condition and attractiveness. Smaller table sets are most attractive, large mirror-lid sets least favoured. Post-war sets are much cheaper and are easy to find at prices between £20 and £200. *Andy Emmerson.*



## THE LONDON PALACE OF MAGIC

*A graphic description of the London Television Station, taken from The Times, January 7th, 1938.*

The official anniversary of public television came on November 2, 1937, but in the eyes of the staff of 265 at the Alexandra Palace the significant date is February 5 of this year. Twelve months will then have passed since the Television Advisory Committee approved the superiority of the Marconi-E.M.I. to the Baird system, and the single standard of transmission was established. Up to that point, lack of space and time had severely hampered the efforts to transform television for the private viewer from an ingenious toy into a serious entertainment.

Television is incongruously housed. Gaunt and unlovely, the Palace dominates part of North London, with only the 220 foot mast to indicate the marvel in the south-east corner. An inadvertent entry by the back door brings the visitor over a desolate branch terminus of the L.N.E.R. into empty, echoing halls, where the assorted objects might have been gathered by a surrealist. Sections of stuffed lions, slot-machines, a bar, posters of dance competitions, and a statue of Lincoln are distributed haphazard. Only a discreet grey door in a corner, painted 'No Entry', marks the back entrance to the overcrowded hive of television. Here the essentials are in the vision and sound transmitting halls on the ground floor, and in two studios above them, one of which is a second string formerly used for the Baird system. On the other side of a narrow corridor, which is both artery and boulevard, are the make-up and dressing rooms, and on the ground floor is a small restaurant. The executive staff's rooms are in the east tower, and in the north-west corner of the building, separated from the rest by the Winter Garden, is the carpenter's shop and an old theatre which the station has acquired with an open mind for whatever purpose it may be needed.

The station's day has two feverish campaigns, culminating at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and 9 o'clock in the evening. Peele's cry from the heart, "O Time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing" would be the best inscription for the doorway. For example, the piano-tuner has to arrive at 7 A.M., because there is no room for him later. The morning is filled with rehearsals and a film demonstration for the benefit of the radio trade, and rehearsals have to be juggled in and out of the two stages. This is where the producers, the best and most successful of whom come from the stage, are most harassed. For the convenience of artistes, early rehearsals take place at Broadcasting House or Maida Vale; if the artists came to the station more frequently they might find no space to rehearse in. When a condensed Othello was performed recently there was only one two-hour rehearsal on the stage. Three-quarters of an hour were spent in setting it, the positions of the players being defined by yellow chalk marks on the white linoleum. This left an hour and a quarter for actual camera rehearsal of a play which was going to take an hour to perform. The actress who played Desdemona had never seen a television camera before, so that she had little enough time to learn how to act into the camera or to master the art of two-dimensional gesture.

Such difficulties are due to limitations of space and money inevitable at this point in the development of television, but their existence tends to create a controlled frenzy towards zero hour. At 2:55 PM or 8:55 PM the principal stage is set. The lights are fixed and three to four cameras and two to three microphones are in position, with the cameramen wearing earphones so as to be in touch with the producer in his control tower above the stage.

The producer is the linchpin of every item, and his control tower, separated from the stage by darkened plate glass, is the most significant place in the studio, for it shows the technical complexities and the difference between television and other forms of entertainment – stage, screen, or sound broadcasting. The producer sits next the window, looking at two frames. One frame shows the image in course of transmission; on to the other he can switch the field of vision of any camera on the set. Beside him sits the production manager, whose functions are similar to those of a stage manager in a theatre (the stage manager of television is on the set taking notes). In front of the producer sit the sound engineer controlling total output, and the sound mixer selecting and cutting it. Behind him is the key man, the vision-mixer. The platform also holds the senior engineer as a roving wing forward, another man in charge of the gramophone, and a junior engineer logging the programme.

This means that there is a team of eight handling the performance between the moment of recording and the moment of transmission to the viewer. Four of the eight – producer, sound engineer, and sound and vision mixers – are indispensable. Nor do they have much time to relax at 4 PM, when the afternoon programme ends, because rehearsal, experiment, and audition start again and so on into the evening. Up to now the record of hurried achievement is held by the clergyman from *Tristan da Cunha*, who appeared in an evening version of *Picture Page*. He was held up by fog and traffic, and reaching the Palace five minutes before the programme finished, was hurried straight on to the stage, unrehearsed, to explain his island.

It might be inferred that this running fight with the clock would mean nerves and discontent. Producers and artistes would like many more rehearsals, and the engineering staff might prefer not to work right through both programmes on alternate days. But the cheerfulness of the staff, from which there have been only two secessions since the service started, is a contribution to industrial psychology proving the value to the individual of work in a small undertaking. The glossy impersonality of Broadcasting House has not yet descended on television. Where everyone knows everyone else, generally by Christian or nick-names, and where an executive department consists of one man and a secretary, correct deportment and the circulation of memoranda are superfluous; continual personal contact oils the machinery. Nor, even if the organisation were bigger, would it be easy to clap the staff into their pigeonholes, when so many jobs call for the all-rounder. On one side the executives and producers must have a quota of technical knowledge, and on the other, the cameraman and the vision-mixer must have more artistic sense than can be given by instruction.

The prevalent spirit was expressed by the studio hand who said, "We're not working; we're being paid for a hobby."

## THE TV DRUNK

*A genuine mystery story by Mike Stott*

I noted a comment in *405 Alive* about the lenses used to magnify the small 9" television pictures. Well, when I started my apprenticeship in 1957, one of my jobs was to look after and fill the plastic (Perspex) lenses that we sold at the Co-op.

So just a few lines (405) about the TV Drunk. We had a customer who owned a 9" Philips TV (or it could have been a Stella built for the Co-ops) and the owner decided to buy a magnifier for the set. It was a cheap way of upgrading the set at the time but as the tube faces were already round with a limited viewing angle I think they only made things worse. Well we sold the magnifier and after about three weeks received a call to say there was a bubble at the top of the lens, so off I went my bottle of wood alcohol and a small funnel.

Arriving at the house I found a bubble filling about 1/8" in the top of the lens. Removing the bung, I topped the lens up and securely replaced the bung (I had got the blame for not fitting it securely before it was delivered and by rotating the lens around the height adjustment spindles made sure there was no air in the lens. I then left, giving my deepest apologies and also noting that there would be no charge for the visit.

Well, as you can imagine, two weeks later we received another call to say there was another bubble in the lens, this time about 1/4". As the lens was made from two sheets of Perspex stuck together, the boss assumed there was a leak and had me go out and bring the lens in for inspection (having taken out a 'loaner'). On returning to the workshop, I refilled the lens and inspected it every morning for a loss of the alcohol, and after about a week the boss suggested we try heating and cooling the lens. So it was placed in front of the large steam radiator we had in the workshop, and as we were on the end block and the heating went off at night the temperature change was quite large.

But after another two weeks still no leak, so I was instructed to return the lens and bring back the 'loaner', I did not notice but on returning



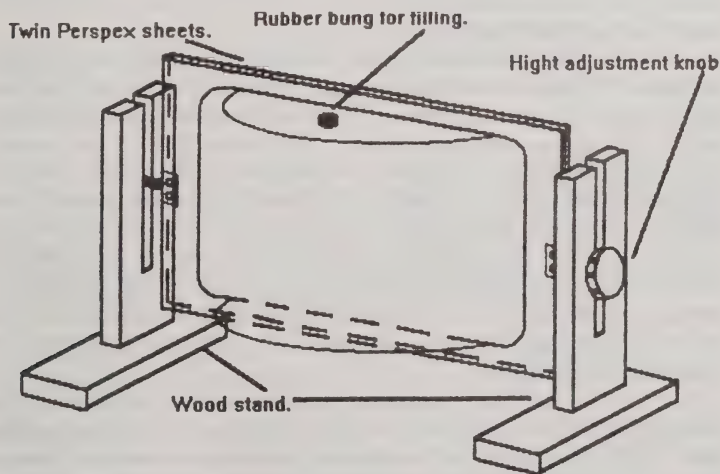
back to the workshop a bubble of about 1/2" was now on the new lens. At this point the boss said: "That's it, we will sort this out next time," and sure enough two weeks later a call came in about a bubble in the lens. I was instructed to go out and bring the lens in and we would fix it that very day. Back at the workshop the boss emptied the lens into a old wood alcohol jar and filled the lens with water this was sealed and tested and again I set off to return the lens.

We heard nothing more for over a year and then we received a call for a small picture. I went out with my bag of valves to find a frame output valve poor and after replacing the valve and setting up the set was offered the in those days customary cup of tea (remember we were on a par with the Doctor). While drinking my tea I ventured to ask about the bubble in the lens and was told only a very small round bubble had appeared about two days after we returned the lens but as it had got no larger they did not call us in, so I went on and finished my tea.

On leaving the house I noticed old granddad working in the garden and as I passed him said "Good morning," only to hear a reply that sounded like "CUSTARD" which was a funny thing to say as I did have a Father – he was also my boss!!

(Think about it....)

I have also included a drawing of the lens unit for those readers that might not have seen a unit of this type.



## **Focus on...**

# **group 9.5**

Once dominant on the home cine scene, the 9.5mm gauge is now little more than a memory for most people... but not for nine-fivers. The 9.5mm film gauge gives picture quality comparable to 16mm (the image area on the film is almost the same, thanks to the unique centre perforation system of 9.5mm) but as a commercial medium, 9.5 has been sidelined first by 8mm, then by Super 8 and finally of course by video.

But 9.5mm is by no means dead! There is still a vast amount of film material available on the 9.5mm gauge and not only are 9.5mm projectors not hard to find, there are still intrepid souls making new ones, converting them from 16mm machines. The nine-fivers are a close-knit fraternity with their own group and magazine and they are devoted to keeping 9.5 alive. All in all, there are close parallels with the 405 movement.

And now Malcolm Cutmore, editor of the group's magazine, has a few words...

Thank you for your recent letter and magazine concerning 405 Alive. This I found very interesting. I remember very much the days of Associated Rediffusion and programmes like *Sixpenny Corner*, which was a very early soap – only 15 minutes a programme, five times a week I think.

It's all basically nostalgia I suppose... very much like Group 9.5, though we do promote the gauge and make a film from time to time. I have given your organisation a small write-up in the next issue of our quarterly magazine.

We have about 430 members in total; about 20 are overseas and the rest are scattered throughout Britain. We have two get-togethers a year in London plus regular smaller club meetings in London and other centres in Britain. Membership is £10 per annum and £8 for renewals. If anyone is interested, membership can be obtained by sending a cheque for £10 (made payable to Group 9.5) to Ron Price, 4 Higher Mead, Lychpit, Basingstoke, Hants., RG24 8YL.

My first experience of television was at the age of 8 (1948) when my father purchased a 9-inch Pye model. It gave us nothing but trouble. But I enjoyed some of the programmes. No children's hour except on a Sunday, then later on Saturdays and eventually in the week.

I enjoyed the coming of commercial television in the middle fifties, that really made the BBC pull their socks up programme wise. I enjoyed a lot of the commercial film programmes like *Saber of London*, *Interpol Calling*, *The Cheaters*, *Crooked Path*. Most of these

were filmed 25-minute stories by the Danzigers, the backbone of the British 'B' movie with small studios on the Elstree estate.

Happy days!

## AN EVENING IN FRONT OF THE TELLY

That was the subtitle of last year's Missing Believed Wiped presentation at the National Film Theatre, on 22nd October. The performance was a sell-out, proving the popularity of these presentations and congratulations are in order to Steve Bryant, Veronica Taylor, John Keeble and all the others associated with this year's 'do'.

And as 'dos' go, this one was rather special since it concerned a 'P as B' (programme as broadcast) recording of an evening's television in March 1964. Most of the old television programmes remaining in the archives are transmission prints, that is films (or tapes) made in advance for transmitting, or telerecordings – film recordings made of a particular programme for archiving. P as B recordings are not unknown but they are usually of a single programme, which is why to have the complete output for an evening's transmission is so unusual. Indeed, as Steve Bryant pointed out when he introduced the session, the BBC has no comparable recording of a whole evening's viewing from this period. They do, it is true have the celebrated 'Elizabethan Evening' from 1953 but that was a special and not representative in any way of normal programmes. What is so delightful about the 1964 programmes is that they are so *ordinary*!

Being a P as B recording we were treated to the full range of continuity links, trails for coming programmes, commercial spots and news bulletins. The late Peter Lewis introduced the proceedings in his inimitable way and everything went smoothly.

A couple of observations. John Radley noticed 2" quad head-banding at intervals, so it would appear that the programmes were recorded on tape first and transferred to 35mm film afterwards. Apparently the recordings were made on the instruction of Sir Lew Grade but were not required afterwards, which is why they survive only as negatives, not positive prints. For this occasion they were transferred to Betacam SP tape.

Particularly noticeable in *About Religion* and *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* how good the camerawork was, always in focus with all the performers on cue. This was live television at its best. The ITN news suffered from lack of actuality footage; instead it relied on stills and where newsreel film was available, all of this was used, even though it didn't add a lot to the story. The only shaky elements were the timing of continuity items; trails for coming programmes were done live, on the fly, and



sometimes the film inserts didn't quite run on cue. This is an observation, not a criticism, though.

*What was most amazing for people of my age (I was 16 when this was first shown), was how familiar the people and imagery were. The mind seemed to slip effortlessly back to the period, the names in the news, the issues discussed, the prices of products in the commercials; nothing seemed strange or out of place – rather eerie! 'Time Machine' was Andrew Doherty's description and how right he was. If only we could have more of this...*

[Editor]

## Film Talk: BEAUTY IN TRUST

**Malcolm O'Neill takes a second look at a film in the series 'Our National Heritage', made for National Benzole.**

**Commentary spoken by JOHN BETJEMAN**

**Running time: 21 minutes**

This popular BBC-2 trade test colour film is considered by many to be a classic, because in style and presentation it is very similar to its sister film *A Journey Into The Weald Of Kent*. In fact both films were part of the same series of productions made for National Benzole, entitled 'Our National Heritage'. This film was made in about 1959.

The standard of photography and the unique style of narration, which only the late Sir John Betjeman could deliver, are excellent. The film is a very brief look at the work of the National Trust and we are taken on a short tour of the country to have a look at some of the villages, country houses, gardens and places of natural beauty which are maintained by the Trust. The narrator explains in some detail that this organisation receives no support financially from the government, but instead relies wholly on donations, endowments and subscriptions from the public and various private sources.

The opening sequences are in a very similar style to *A Journey Into The Weald of Kent*, only this time instead of travelling along the Old Kent Road, we leave London in the opposite direction and head off along the A30 (or Great South West Road) on our way to Cornwall. On this first leg of the tour, Betjeman complains about the noise and congestion caused by the heavy volumes of traffic on this main thoroughfare to the West Country, which in the film looks quite empty compared by today's standards. Transport enthusiasts will notice the street furniture of the period,

including items such as double bracketed concrete street lighting columns (quite new at the time), the old style of traffic lights and of course the cars and lorries, which are all of British manufacture! There is even a fleeting glimpse of a red London Transport Central Area single deck half-cab bus from either the A.E.C. *T* or Leyland *TD* class, probably on route 216 from Kingston, waiting for the traffic lights to change colour.

Next we find ourselves in Cornwall, or to be more precise, North Cornwall, where our narrator was raised as a child. Spring is the best time to explore this part of the country with its breezy heights and rugged coastline with wild flowers, and we are told that Pentire Point on the north coast was acquired by the Trust so that its outstanding beauty could be preserved forever. Cornish farmers have looked after this land for generations and we see such a farm close to Pentire Point. We also take a look at the mysterious Mole Island which was the outermost island on the edge of the Celtic kingdom. Although deserted for centuries, there are indications that this was once a garrison for an unknown pre-Celtic race, as there is evidence of a fort on the island. Surrounded by the wild Atlantic Coast, it may not be quite the ideal place for man to settle, but it is a natural haven for wild life. We are shown some of the wild birds, seals, crabs, mussels, plants and other forms of wild life that have made this island their home.

The next place we visit is less dramatic and much more genteel in character. Claydon House, near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, had been the home of the Verney family for 500 years, although the present house was built for the second Lord Verney in 1752. Although extremely plain externally, internally the house is very extravagant indeed and features a magnificent 'Chinese' room. An unknown interior decorator by the name of Lightfoot was responsible for most of the work and it appears that this gentleman was mad! Anything to do with China or the Orient was very fashionable in the mid-18th century and we see the strong eastern influences throughout the house. The sister of Florence Nightingale married a Verney, and because of this would visit and stay at the house often. In fact the house is supposed to be haunted by the lady with the lamp! This property was a gift from the Verney family and when this film was made, the house had only been in the ownership of the Trust for five years.

Our journey continues into East Anglia and to a place called Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire. This area is an excellent example of a nature reserve, and there are some fascinating views of the local windmill pump, a sight so typical in this part of England and local birds such as the Sedge Warbler. Reeds and sedge from the Fens are used in the 'thatching' process and we find a locally-produced thatched roof put to good use on the village post office.

We head south again, this time to visit the village of Laycock in Wiltshire. Before nearby Trowbridge and Chippenham developed as major centres, this village was the focus of the local woollen industry and in medieval times the main Bath road ran through Laycock. Originally owned by the

Talbot family, the whole village has been kept intact by the Trust and is a delightful blend of Elizabethan timber and 18th/19th century brick architecture. A pleasing feature of the village is the use which has been made of the old blacksmith's shop which we see in the film has been converted into a bus shelter!

A beautiful landscaped garden that features in this film is located at Stourhead House, which was originally a mere hollow in the downs on the Wilts./Dorset border. In 1741 the little stream in the valley was drained to form a lake and on the shore we find a church, a temple, grottoes, trees and shrubs. Essentially this is two gardens in one; a classic landscaped Georgian style garden and a late Victorian garden consisting of blossoming shrubs. Its then off to the Lake District, where we see one of the first ever properties owned by National Trust, Brandlehow. The scenes that follow of the lakes such as Derwent Water with the dark mysterious hills in the background and the varied scenery are well caught on film. It was Wordsworth who wrote: "Everything in the Lake District is to the right scale". Not many would disagree with that.

There are brief views of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall (which was a gift from Lord St. Levan) and Cothill, a 15th century manor house in the same county which had been accepted by the Treasury in lieu of death duties from the owner Lord Mount Edgecombe. The same situation applied to Ickworth House in Suffolk, which in turn was handed over to the Trust. This Georgian property which had originally been the home of the Marquis of Bristol, was built for the Lord Bishop of Derry in the late 18th century, and bears a striking resemblance to the Royal Albert Hall in London in its design.

After a brief visit to Avebury in Wiltshire, at that time the largest prehistoric sight in the country, we take a look at a small and very modest country house in Somerset. Because the owner could no longer afford its upkeep, she gave it to the Trust and became a tenant, thus ensuring its future. However, in complete contrast we see a fine country house which has allowed to become derelict and it is at this point in the film where Betjeman firmly reminds us that if it were not for all the hard work and effort of organisations such as the National Trust, many more fine buildings would go to decay, the devil and the demolition men! Incidentally, the dramatic music used at the end of this film also featured in a couple of 'B' films produced at Merton Park film studios in the 1950s.

I can remember seeing this film for the first time in the very early 1960s on BBC Television, possibly as a trade test colour film during one of the experimental NTSC colour transmissions which were radiated in the afternoons in the London area from Crystal Palace or even as a 'scheduled programme'. From November 1965 it featured regularly as a BBC-2 trade test colour film and to this day remains a firm favourite with many.



**First transmission date as a BBC2 trade test colour film: 5th November 1965.**

**Last transmission date as a BBC-2 trade test colour film: 3rd August 1971.**

*A Random Production for National Benzole.*

For copies on VHS contact BP INTERNATIONAL LTD (which holds National Benzole films) at Britannic Tower, Moor Lane, Moorgate, LONDON, EC2Y 9BU. Contact: Colin Swinson, 0171-496 2264. Approximate cost: £37.50 per VHS tape.

*Editor's note: National Benzole is now a forgotten brand but this petrol company did a lot to promote itself with the National Heritage theme during the 1950s. As well as these films, the company issued many press advertisements as well as a number of illustrated books, which turn up frequently in second-hand book shops. Later the brand dropped the Benzole name and took up a more sporty theme – the Getaway people.*

**1929 *Radio News Magazine* ('Television Number'), reviewed by Phil Nelson**  
(website Phil's Old Radios at <http://www.accessone.com/~philn>)

My wife found this magazine at a garage sale. This special 'Television Number' of *Radio News* was published by Hugo Gernsback in 1929. It's full of informative articles about the then-pioneering technology of scanning-disk television.

This cover shows Gernsback in his home, sitting in a flowery upholstered arm chair and peering at the miniscule 'screen' on his enormous handbuilt TV set. The square box in front of him contains the scanning disk and neon bulb that transmitted the image. To his left are the receiving box, sitting inside a bookshelf, and the rounded speaker on top. One cable runs from the receiver to the viewing box, and he holds a second green cable in his hand.

The magazine includes a prophetic column by Gernsback on the possible future development of TV. Among other things, he correctly predicted that TV would become a commercial medium. In hindsight, it wasn't a very tough call. The very first TV broadcasting stations had already been approached by eager advertisers, even though the pictures they broadcast had no sound, and could be seen by only a

handful of experimenters using sets they had built from kits or from scratch.

In another article, Gernsback describes how to build the experimental model pictured here. You had to be pretty dedicated – the image was so tiny that Gernsback hung a magnifying glass over the 'screen'. And since the images were not synchronised, you had to sit there and hit a switch (to speed up the scanning disk) whenever the picture started to go crazy. Nevertheless, it had to be a mighty exciting experience to watch one of these.

The border of the cover contains the word Radiovision alternating with Television. Perhaps they are meant as synonyms, although in Gernsback's column he's a bit fussy about terminology. He defines television as 'instantaneous sight at a distance' (i.e., live broadcasts), distinguishing it from 'radio movies', which he called 'canned sight'.

A separate article in this issue describes radio movies, also called animated radio telephotography. Instead of live images, an apparatus projected light through the movie film. The images were scanned by a spinning disk similar to the disk used in live TV broadcasting.

From time to time we are asked questions, many of which seem to crop up time and time again. This then is our list of ...

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Why do people collect old TVs? Do many people do this?**

For the same reason they might collect old radios, telephones, furniture or whatever. It's a hobby, an interesting one, and the source material is still fairly inexpensive. One of your friends or relatives probably has an old set in the loft! We have more than 300 people in our Group and there must be many more collectors.

### **Is the 405 Alive Group only for people who collect old TV receivers?**

Not at all. We have historians, students and many people who are just interested in the black and white era of classic TV generally. Some of them collect TV cameras and studio equipment, even an old outside broadcast scanner van. Others are more interested in the programmes or the old commercials, some just enjoy reading about TV of years gone by. We cover the complete 405 line period, also the early 625 line colour transmissions.

**Do you operate a lending library of old TV archive programmes? Do you sell these or does anyone else?**

No and no. But there are many people who have acquired these from various sources (recorded off TV, transferred from old 16mm telerecordings found in attics or junk shops, 'leaks' from the TV companies' archives, etc.) so these programmes are in circulation. Generally if you put a want advertisement in our magazine, you may well get somebody offering what you're looking for. Of course, it helps if you have something to offer in exchange or you may offer to cover the wear and tear costs for their video recorder in a generous fashion. Most of these tapes are on 625 lines for convenience of viewing.

There is also a group called STARS (Savers of Television And Radio Shows) whose members lend each other copies of old programmes. Write to STARS care of Malcolm Chapman, 96 Meadvale Road, London, W5 1NR.

Do you people swap recordings of TV test card music and so on?

Some of us do and there is a separate club for this interest. It's called the Test Card Circle (write with SAE to Doug Bond, 98 Great North Road, Gosforth, NEWCASTLE upon TYNE, NE3 5JP).

**Are old TVs easy to renovate and repair?**

Generally yes - they are not very complicated or intricate inside. There is no real shortage of valves and other spares. Only some picture tubes are hard to find now.

**Surely there are no programmes on the 405 line system now - so do you watch blank screens!?**

No, because it's no great problem getting 405 line TVs to work with programmes recorded on a VHS (or Betamax) recorder. Most VCRs will record and play back 405 line material quite well, even though they were not designed to do this. Obviously the TV must be in good working order, then all you need do is build a modulator which translates the video signal from your recorder onto a VHF channel suitable for the TV. Your video recorder already has a modulator which puts out a signal on channel 36, but 405 line TVs don't normally have UHF tuners, so you need to make a VHF modulator. Also it has to be positive modulation, with AM sound, but those finer points are all covered in the design details.

**Why not just convert the old sets to work on the current 625 line system?**

It's not always feasible, often expensive and destroys the sets' authenticity. Would you put a new Formica surface on top of an antique oak kitchen table? No true collector would do this kind of thing ...

**I have an old 405-line TV and wish to watch pictures on it occasionally. What's the minimum-cost way of doing this? Is there some adapter that will allow me to watch today's programmes on an old set?**



First things first. Are you sure your old TV is in working order? If not, don't just plug it in to find out. If it has suffered from damp during storage (and you may not know this), it could be a fire hazard if plugged in. Certain components may fail if subjected to 250 volts, although in the hands of experts, they could be brought back to life slowly, by applying a low voltage first and gradually increasing the voltage over a period of hours.

But let's assume your set is fine (and even if not, it can probably be refurbished by a good technician – most old-established TV dealers have someone who can repair valve-era sets). The simplest way to make it show pictures again is from a VHS video recorder, not using tapes that you record or buy but using tapes which have been recorded specially in the 405-line system (we can put you in touch with people who can supply 405-line tapes). You need a special device called a Band I Modulator which will cost between £30 and £80, depending on quality, and we have details of the suppliers. Then you're in business and can show pictures (but only the programmes recorded on the tape). Incidentally, there is one kind soul who advertises in 405 Alive magazine who will copy your 625-line recordings onto 405-line tape, so there isn't any problem in this respect.

If you want to go the whole hog, you'll need a standards converter that actually transforms today's 625-line pictures into 405-line images. These are not cheap; you are talking of extremely complex technology, not a simple DIY job. And don't believe anyone who tells you there's a cheaper way of doing it, because apart from finding a 405-line era TV camera (where would you find one outside a museum?) and using this to shoot the screen of your 625-line television, there isn't any cheaper way. Twenty years ago, the standards converter would have cost about £12,000 in today's money but you can now buy one for about £300 and that is extremely good value for money. The producer of these devices, Dinosaur Designs, advertises in our 405 Alive magazine, so you can find full details there.

### **Where do you find the technical information?**

There are countless textbooks in libraries and second-hand book shops. There have also been several articles specifically on restoring old TVs in Television magazine. Our own newsletter is full of information too! For the modulator, if you are handy with electronics you can build one yourself (parts cost around £20) or there are a few 405 Alivers who will build them for other people (at prices ranging from £30 to around £80).

We will try and help with other problems but this is done as a gesture to subscribers. Please don't ask for tons of help if you aren't a member of the Group. If you're that interested in old television, it must surely be worth your while joining in!

### **Are old TVs valuable now?**

Not normally, unless they date back to the pre-war period and are in fine condition. One or two sets – for instance the moulded bakelite Bush TV22

– are considered design classics and have become very popular as 'yuppie antiques'. This has pushed up their price but true collectors are not concerned with the cash value of their collections. Within our circle we try to keep prices low, and new collectors should avoid over-priced items in antique shops. Salerooms and charity shops – and friends – are a much better source of supply.

**Do you recommend any books?**

Yes ....

HISTORIC TELEVISIONS & VIDEO RECORDERS, by Michael Bennett-Levy. Large colour illustrated paperback, £15 post-paid.

Tv IS KING, by Michael Bennett-Levy. Large colour illustrated hardback, £17 post-paid.

Both from MBL Publications, Monkton House, Old Craighall, Musselburgh, Midlothian, EH21 8SF.

There will also be a book on old television (written by Andrew Emmerson) in the *Shire Albums* series of small paperbacks. Publication date is not fixed yet.

**Does 405 Alive want old TVs, valves, etc.?**

No, but we'll gladly advertise your unwanted items (no charge). Don't throw away anything useful or valuable!

**Is 405 Alive a club or society?**

Not exactly, it is fundamentally a not-for-profit magazine with an enthusiastic group of readers. There is no committee or power structure. Although we try to conduct our operations in a businesslike and professional manner, we are not a business. Please make allowances if there are occasional delays or lapses.

**Are you associated with any other organisation?**

Yes and no. We have a number of subscriptions from people involved in the field of television production and conservation. Most 405 Alivers tend to belong to one or more of the following: the Royal Television Society, the British Vintage Wireless Society and the British Amateur Television Club. We support all of these, also the Alexandra Palace TV Museum Trust.

# THE BOOK

**Bernard Wilkie**

In 1954 Jack Kine and I were brought together to form the first ever television special effects unit and, determined to run it in a business-like manner, we kept records of every show we worked on. We wrote down the type of effect and the methods used and at the end of every month totted up the figures and entered them in a column.

Being clever, we didn't laboriously write out the names of the shows, the designers and the producers – we simply cut out the details from the *Radio Times* and pasted them in the book.

We maintained these records until in 1957 I crossed swords with management once too often and was (rightly) banished to the basement. This resulted in the last entry which reads simply 19.7.57 'Section re-organised'.

The rest of the pages are blank and even though Jack and I were re-united later we never resumed our record keeping.

When Jack retired I decided that the precious book should be his – an emotional farewell to each other and our past.

And that's where it might have remained had I not decided to write 'our story'. Jack, believing I should have the book for reference, posted it to my address.

And en route – it disappeared! The precious parcel that should have taken no more than a few days to reach me had vanished from the face of the Earth.

We were distraught. We questioned post-offices and parcel forces, postmen and controllers – all to no avail. Then, nearly three weeks later, it arrived at my door.

And so, forty years on, I'm re-sticking the now loose small brown cuttings from the *Radio Times*. With so many once famous names and programmes it makes fascinating reading, but I do wonder how with a programme as momentous as 1984, all I could find to say about our part in it was – 'Attended rehearsals and transmission. Assisted in various film shots and setting and operating.'



# A REAL PERIOD PIECE!

Foreword, by C. Grant Dixon

The following article was written just two weeks before my 17th birthday and is dated 14th March 1933. Please excuse any defects of accuracy, style or grammar and put it down to my youthful inexperience.

I was asked to give a talk on "Television" to the school scientific society and as I had never given a talk before I wrote it all out. I also made up a hurried Baird 30-line disc in cardboard and whizzed it round in front of a 'beehive' neon to illustrate the principle of scanning. In the text, note the absence of the word 'radio' which came into general use rather later; in those days it was 'the wireless'.

I subsequently made up a better aluminium disc and did my best to receive the broadcasts from the London National transmitter on 261m but as my home was in Whitehaven (Cumbria) I was not very successful.

## WHAT IS TELEVISION?

Many people consider television to be one of those fantastic impossibilities which Jules Verne's vivid imagination could have created. These people rarely consider that it is now an established fact and not a theory or even a laboratory phenomenon. I am now going to attempt to show you the various discoveries and inventions which have made this science possible. I will also try and give a brief description of the methods of transmission and reception.

In the method employed by the BBC television is transmitted in the same manner as sound, but it might be of interest to mention a few names that will always be associated with the beginnings of wireless. James Clerk Maxwell's theory on the nature of electromagnetic waves states that if an electric field is suddenly altered a disturbance is projected into space with the velocity of light. A simple way of understanding this is to imagine the electric field as the surface of a pond on a calm day; the alteration is similar to a stone being dropped in and the wireless waves are represented by the ripples spreading outwards. The only difference is that wireless waves travel 186,000 miles per second whereas the speed of a water ripple is comparatively slow. It was Hertz who, in 1888 discovered these waves and they were named after him; later, however, the term "wireless waves" became more common. At first these waves were employed in what is known as Wireless Telegraphy using the celebrated Morse code. Later, other inventions, notably that of the valve by Fleming and also the invention of tuning by Oliver Lodge enabled these electromagnetic waves to be applied to wireless telephony by which speech, and today television are transmitted. You will be able to judge for yourselves what a remarkable change has taken place even in the last ten years. It is only ten years ago that the BBC commenced broadcasting and the modern standard of broadcasting has risen to extremely high levels.

And now let us skip back a few years and consider the plight of a cable operator on one of the trans-Atlantic cable stations. This operator was very much puzzled by the

behaviour of some of his instruments which varied in accuracy from day to night and also from light to shade. Being possessed of a scientific mind and also wishing to right the resulting discrepancies he made experiments with each of his instruments in turn and eventually found out that an instrument containing a small amount of the rare element Selenium possessed an electrical resistance which varied slightly with the intensity of light falling on the selenium. This discovery was gone into in a thorough manner by scientific investigators and it was discovered that other substances would give the same effect. Copper oxide and galena exhibit it to a slight extent but the greatest effect is produced by using a thin film of one of the alkali metals as an electrode of a two-electrode vacuum tube. Light falling on the metal releases electrons and these render the air left in the tube a conductor thus decreasing the resistance of the "photo-electric cell". The metals potassium and caesium are the ones usually used for this purpose

Of the two most important applications of this photo-electric effect, one is the counting of small objects which are passing in front of the cell on a belt conveyor. In this way the cell is able to count cigarettes at the rate of 90 per second and to eject any single one which falls short of a given standard in size and colour by means of a jet of compressed air. Another application is television and it is this that I will try and explain to you.

The whole question of broadcasting is merely a changing of vibrations. In telephony, sound vibrations are converted to electrical vibrations by the microphone and after going through intermediate processes are converted to electromagnetic vibrations by the transmitter. The receiving set, that you know so well, does the exact opposite to convert them back to sound again. If, instead of turning sound waves into electrical waves, we could turn the light waves of a picture or scene into electrical waves and have a similar apparatus for reconstructing the picture at the receiving end we would be "seeing by wireless" That is the elementary principle of Television.

The scene to be analysed is first split into light strips and the varying intensity of light is made to produce a similar varying of intensity by means of one, or more, photo-electric cells. The process of splitting up the picture and reconstructing it is known as scanning and I cannot express it better than Mr Baird who writes in the 1933 copy of the BBC Yearbook as follows "For the purpose of explanation let us assume that we are televising the head and shoulders of an artist. In front of him is a powerful source of light which is broken up mechanically into a rapidly moving spot. This is effected by having a beam of light projected on to a revolving drum around whose outer edge are positioned mirrors, each one set at a slightly different angle to its predecessor. The effect is to cause a tiny area of light to move from the bottom to the top of the subject's features and thus create a strip of light. Immediately this one spot has finished its movement a second spot takes its place and performs an identical movement, except that the second strip is displaced to the left of the original strip. In this way 30 strips of light are built up side by side, each strip just touching its neighbour on either side and although at any one instant only a tiny spot is visible the process is carried out so rapidly, namely 12.5 times per second, that an onlooker would have the impression that the artist was completely illuminated."

Now let us suppose that we are able to watch the successive movements of the spot along one particular strip. At the bottom the spot plays on the artists coat and as the coat is dark very little light is reflected; what is reflected is picked up by several photo-cells which are arranged in front of the artist and they then allow a very weak current to flow. If, during its upward journey the spot falls on a light portion of the man (his face for example) the cells will allow a correspondingly strong current to flow. Thus a succession of weak and strong currents replaces the actual picture. This varying current is transmitted in the usual way by a broadcasting station.

So much for the transmission of the picture; the next problem is the reception. An ordinary wireless receiver may be used to receive the television signals and a loudspeaker may be used to tune them in. The sound heard on the loudspeaker may be described as a high-pitched note with a chirrupy sound superimposed on it. As the main object of the receiver is to build up a picture in light and shade it is obvious that some source of light is necessary. Another stipulation is that the light must be modulated several thousand times a second; this at once excludes all filament lamps as in these lamps the filament glows for an appreciable time after the current is turned off. As the incandescent solid proved useless men turned to the incandescent gas. It had been a curious phenomenon to men of science for a few years past that if an electric current is passed through a gas at low pressure the gas glows. This peculiar property was first used as a source of illumination in television although it had previously been used under slightly different conditions for the famous X-rays. Different gases give different glows but the one that is particularly suited to television is Neon and most television experimenters call the lamp "a neon" regardless of the gas which it contains. The lamp consists of a glass globe filled with neon gas at very low pressure and having two electrodes; one of these is a metal plate and the other is a small bar. On passing the current in one direction the plate glows with a pinkish light and the small bar remains dark; if the current is reversed the bar glows and the plate remains dark. It is interesting to note in passing that a well-known British firm have put on the market a series of bulbs which will fit the standard light socket and whose electrodes are in the shape of the letters of the alphabet. When the current is passed a pink glowing letter is seen and this novelty is largely used by advertisers.

But to return to television; the neon lamp is connected to the receiving wireless set in a special way, which cannot be gone into now, and when the set is tuned in to the station which is transmitting television it is flickering in accordance with the light and shade of the scene in the studio; all that remains is to build it up into a picture. The piece of apparatus which does this is called a scanning disc. It consists of a large disc around whose circumference are punched 30 holes in a spiral. The light shining through the hole represents the spot of the transmitter, but instead of shining on to an artist the neon shines through the holes of the scanning disc on to a ground glass screen and the spot of light moving on this screen is a replica of the spot of light in the transmitting studio. Now the light of the neon is modulated so as to correspond with the light and shade of the transmitted scene and therefore a replica of the scene is built up on the ground glass screen. This is repeated 12.5 times every second and the result is an illusion of motion just in the same way as a cinematograph is an illusion of motion.



There is another way of receiving the picture, however; you will recall that in describing the transmission Mr Baird said that the flying spot was produced by allowing a narrow beam of light to fall on a specially constructed drum of mirrors. This second method employs a constant light source which emits a narrow beam, the beam is modulated and in the same way a flying spot is produced which is also projected on to a ground glass screen. This latter method is more modern and owing to its costliness it has not found favour with experimenters who still stick to the scanning disc.

That is just an outline of television but in this, as in all things, a large number of practical difficulties have to be faced. To begin with, the transmitting drum must be kept going at exactly the same speed as the receiving drum (or disc) and the slightest variation of either of them will knock the picture out of phase; that is to say it will split vertically and the bits will change places. If the speed is kept wrong the picture will acquire a permanent diagonal slip and will be constantly slipping out of view...For a long time the only method of counteracting this was to be constantly watching the picture for any sign of slip and correcting the motor speed accordingly; this was naturally a tiresome business and engineers did their best to get this performed automatically. To cut a long story short a method was eventually evolved; a series of signals were created by the transmitting motor and they were made to operate a magnet in the receiver. This magnet was situated close to the edge of a 30-toothed gear wheel and as each tooth came past it exerted a retarding pull by means of the wireless signal. This had the effect of keeping the motor at a constant speed which was practically equal to that of the transmitting motor. The only disadvantage in this system lies in the fact that any external wireless signal of a violent nature, such as atmospherics, would retard the motor to such an extent that the picture would again be out of phase.

But in spite of many difficulties it may be said that television has progressed. Since the day that Mr Baird announced his invention it has grown rapidly. In 1926 the BBC was broadcasting television for experimental purposes in conjunction with the Baird Television Co. In 1929 the BBC made their first public broadcast of television, the actual studio belonged to the Baird Television Co. but it was transmitted by the BBC. Finally, in 1932 the BBC gave the first broadcast of television on their own; this was the first television broadcast to be included in the regular programmes. It is no exaggeration to say that twice the number of people will take an interest in television now that a television programme is ensured 4 times a week for 2 years.

As to the future, who knows? Will the man who tours the world in his armchair, or the man who telephones to the distant corners of the earth to literally "catch a glimpse" of happenings there, ever think of the pioneer work done by such men as Sydney A. Moseley, Lance Sieveking and John Logie Baird?

## **ON THE BOOKSHELF**

### **A second helping of reading matter**

**JACK HYLTON PRESENTS** by Pamela W. Logan.  
Paperback, 116 pages, published 1995 by BFI Publishing.  
Price £12.99. ISBN 0-85170-551-0.

#### **JACK HYLTON PRESENTS... THANKS A LOT, JACK!**

***A review by Denis Gifford***

And thanks even more, Pam Logan, or Pamela W. Logan as she has become since she wrote the book. A year or so ago a somewhat select group of old-timers including Bob Monkhouse, Dick Vosburgh, Denis Norden and myself, were called together to watch a BFI screening of a grab-bag of programmes and pieces. The afternoon was hostessed, if that's a PC word, by a rather shy young lady. After an hour or so of wonderful and hilarious memories of the first years of ITV, we all were treated to a cup of Archive tea, poured by Pam, while we reminisced over the clips and progs.

Then suddenly in September last, a glamorous, assured, knowledgeable commère (another non-PC term – but I did say I was an old-timer!) introduced no fewer than five nights at the National Film Theatre. Her hair was shorter, she looked taller, and her smile had arrived with a vengeance. Even apart from Pamela W., the evenings were among the best I'd ever spent at the NFT, and I was there on opening night! (I was even there when it was the Festival of Britain Telekinema!).

As the shows progressed, running some 20 programmes in all, half-hour and one-hour, plus lots of well-chosen clips, they got even better as Pam (pardon me, Pamela) introduced celebrities from the audience, including the sweetly petite, still as young as ever (well almost) Anthea Askey, Dick Vosburgh and Brad Ashton, the once great comedy writing partnership who have been parted these many years, and Hughie Green, with snappy anecdotes galore.

The programme sheets also plugged Pam's book, *Jack Hylton Presents*, which the BFI published, and which is an absolutely excellent and essential buy for anyone who remembers the Fifties and, of course, for those who do not but have an interest in television. The book recounts in an unheavy style the history of Associated-Rediffusion's comedy arm,

which was headed (can you head an arm?) by the brilliant former danceband leader and then showbiz impresario Jack Hylton.

Not exactly a success story, Hylton's shows were frequently less than excellent, often less than good, and now and then real stinkers! But these were early days when we had only BBC comedies on television, and had those not virtually all been live or junked, we could today compare them side-by-side with Hylton's shows. I think we would find Hylton, with his low budgets, his lack of studio space, and his – indeed everybody's – lack of really good writers, comes out well ahead. For one man and his string-and-sellotape set-up to produce two half-hours and one full hour of comedy and variety every seven days, plus taking care of his theatrical empire, well, the mind, as they say, biggles! At least, the nostalgic mind!

Let me list a few of the shows featured in the season (thanks to a certain Mr R. K. Hilton who has inherited the once secret stock of cans that were lodged in the Adelphi Theatre attic. They were known to me in my *Looks Familiar* days, but we couldn't get at them at the time).

Arthur Askey in *Before Your Very Eyes*; Flanagan and Allen in *Together Again*; Max Miller in *Music Box*; Anthea as Mrs Henderson in *The Dickie Henderson Half-Hour*; Eric Barker in *Something In The City* (bet you'd forgotten that one!); the fantastic Robert Dhery company shows starring Tony Hancock and Anne Shelton; *Alfred Marks Time*; the Crazy Gang's god-awful quiz, *Make Me Laugh* (guest star Arthur English) and, of course, what evening with Jack Hylton would be complete without Rosalina Neri?

Let us hope now that so many of the programmes have been restored and made showable, some go-ahead cable station will hire them. Meanwhile, buy the book (despite its awful cover!); it's the best £12.99-handful of history you will ever find.



The following article will probably put you off restoring an old TV for life but at least you'll have a good laugh. Actually, you might just pick up some very useful restoration tips as well. In fact, the authors would make a good double-act to go on TV...

## **RESTORING A PYE B18T**

**or**

## **HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE FLYBACK EHT**

***By the Dinosaur Team (mainly Mike Lzycky but  
with some co-channel interference from Dave  
Grant)***

So there I am, a big cheese (well, more of a Kraft triangle, really) in 'Dinosaur' and yet I had no 405-line telly; surely an inappropriate state of affairs if ever there was one!

Actually, that wasn't true. I did have one but it didn't work (*of course not, it's a Pye!* – Dave). Perhaps a little background is called for here.

Some years ago I decided that as I had some sixty or seventy radios, it was about time that an early television joined the fold. Still kicking myself for not buying a Bush TV32 for £30 (including VAT and delivery!) from Tudor Rees back in Christmas 1982, (and to make matters worse, my parents offered to buy it as a present!) I felt the time was right to take the plunge. I originally passed over the Bush because there was no 405 about to make it work; practicable, let alone affordable, standards conversion was still many years away, and my 'local' had long since closed down to make way for stereo FM services.

So the agonising over what set to buy began. Nothing too big of course, and nothing *too* expensive – a pre-war set, much as I would have liked one, was out of the question on both counts. So that left me with a post-war set as my option, but which? By this time (probably about 1990) the TV22/32 had *definitely* become a ghastly 'Yuppie antique' and consequently were attracting prices that were way out of proportion in relation to the actual set, a bit like a round Ekco – all of which were bottom-of-the-range sets with basic electronics and a cheap Bakelite box. So time to look elsewhere, and

perhaps to a set that was *technically* significant rather than a triumph of form over content.

Hence the choice of a Pye B18T (*a fool and his money* — Dave) over some of the other contenders. It had, after all, no mains transformer to die, and no enormous and bound-to-be-dead mains dropper with a bunch of white ceramic 'RS' grapes hanging from it, and also it had the virtue of being quite small and, well, cuddly (!) really.

The technical significance, for those of you who probably weren't aware, is that the Pye B18T was the first truly mains transformer-less design, thus opening the door to Television for the first time to people who hitherto had to resort to rotary converters to power a TV set because their local power company happened to provide a DC supply to their homes.

Pye sold many thousands of these sets (*who said you couldn't fool all of the people...? — Dave*) and the sets I picked up were early examples, ones that you won't find the circuit of in *Radio & Television Servicing* — not even the early single-volume issue. They were bought for the princely sum of £45 for the two. Something life had taught me became very evident later; NEVER judge a book by its cover. The sets then stood wrapped up in a bag, semi-forgotten, until this year.

### The Restoration

No, don't worry, it isn't History at school! Hopefully this will be a lot more entertaining, embracing as it does:

- ¶ Electronic theory:
- ¶ Design practice:
- ¶ Restoration tips:
- ¶ BBC Engineering principles & practice:
- ¶ The casual use of the modern profanity in relation to the restoration of vintage broadcast receivers. (*There was a lot of that!* — Dave)

So, picture the scene; a sunny August afternoon on a green lawn somewhere in South Lincolnshire, and a rotund BBC engineer is staring at two Pye B18Ts before him. One of these sets has a quite good box, and the other one—well, it looked as though it had spent its life at the bottom of one of the knot-holes that were such a feature of my home village, situated as it was in the centre of the Fletton brick-making industry. Not much in it, you may say. (*Easy, throw 'em both in the aforementioned knot-hole!* — Dave). Pick the one in the good box, like any rational and sane human being would. Well, to me, sanity is something that equates to dull, and to be avoided at all costs. Wasn't it Spike Milligan who said,

Of course I'm sane, I have a certificate to prove it!

Well, closer examination was required, and this is where the *caveat* I gave you really paid off. Fundamentally, the good one was, well, a heap of junk – easy on the eye, but inside, eeurgh!

Once the chassis was out, (an easy job on this set, just two screws and unplug the loudspeaker, unlike some I could mention) (*Pah!* – Dave) the full horror became evident; this thing had merely superficial worth, and the curse of the Phantom Tweaker was well evident, even manifesting itself on the bottom of the cabinet in the form of a hatch covering the area of the RF stages where the cabinet had been cut away. Boy, did this set the alarm bells ringing!

Looking more closely at the coils in the RF stage, none of the cores in them had a straight slot, all looking as though they had been adjusted with heavy-handed vigour and a PO No. 1 (that's a 1/8" screwdriver.) As this set is a TRF, the idea of a full alignment – assuming all the coils were undamaged and all the cores were there – appealed about as much as a course on BBC *newspeak*, so I looked further before putting on the black cap. It got worse. (*Should have bought a Murphy!* – Dave) The tube was full of air; it had the classic feathery gettering around the neck of the tube, caused possibly by some idiot trying to get the metal base off that forms the pin ident and the locating device on these B8G-based tubes. I mean, why?

To make matters worse, it wasn't even the *right* kind of tube; an unmetallised MW22-7 which has the wrong heater current (0.6A) for the valves used, which is basically a large handful of EF50s. A tube like that would have been fine for say a B16T, or a Bush TV1. The final nail in the coffin was underneath, in the form of various small electrolytics strewn around under the chassis to replace a smoothing condenser which presumably had caused the somewhat spectacular demise of the surge limiter wired to the anodes of the rectifier, a PZ30. The surge limiter is a twin section 47-ohm wire-wound resistor. Well, was, in this case; it had neatly unravelled one section. That was it; I had seen enough. I decided to cut my losses and use this one for spares. (*Still say the knot-hole would have been better* – Dave)

Now, remember what I said about judging a book by its cover? I turned to the rough one. Here was a different beast altogether. Virtually no repairs had been done to it in its life, apart from the obligatory smoothing condenser change, but this had been done properly. Still the wrong tube, mind you – a Mullard MW22-14c rather than the correct MW22-14. What does the 'c' stand for? Somewhat curiously, uncoated ('Clear'). Better still, all the coils still had their factory sealant on them. This was the one!

So I repaired to the workshop and put the chassis on the bench, ready to start. However, whilst removing the chassis, I spotted two screw-holes in the cabinet roof, about a CRT. isolation transformer's width apart. The leads to the tube base were wrong too; they were the wrong colour and had been

cut and tucked inside the grommet bringing the CRT. connections through. Oh dear... Had I got a duff tube with a heater-cathode short? You'll find out later. There was no transformer in either cabinet, by the way.

### The nitty-gritty

As with the restoration of any piece of valved equipment, there are certain components that at the very least should be checked, if not changed on spec., and we all know what they are: waxed-paper condensers and smoothing electrolytics.

But first, however, comes cleaning. So with the chassis outside, it first had all the valves and the CRT removed, and then the metal hoop that retains the CRT was removed along with the focus magnet assembly, thus leaving the chassis deck clear. Then it was out with the toothbrush and diluted detergent, and all the chassis was given a thorough scrubbing until it was quite shiny. Two bracing bars, being of mild steel, had picked up some rust, so these were cleaned after removal with 0000-gauge wire wool soaked in oil. The chassis in this set is a two piece aluminium pressing, the largest part being the chassis proper, and the other being the back of the chassis carrying the preset controls, the fuses and mains adjustment panels. So *that's* what happened to all the reclaimed aluminium of World War II! Similarly the metal hoop was cleaned, and then polished with Solvol Autosol.

The focus magnet and picture shift assembly was next to be cleaned, as it was full of dust and congealed grease that not unsurprisingly hindered its smooth operation (*Of course, if it had been a Murphy, it would have had electromagnetic focus and you wouldn't have had this problem* –Dave). Now in the manual, there are *dire* warnings about disassembling the focus magnet – so I ignored them. You can do it, as long as you heed certain things;

1. You don't stick steel screwdrivers to the magnets;
2. You don't fill it up with wire wool when you're cleaning it.

With the unit in what seemed like a dozen pieces, they were cleaned up using where necessary a nylon scouring pad to get rid of the worst excesses of *anno domini* and then regreased and reassembled. The shift assembly relies on two pads of sorbo rubber which are held in compression by the magnet assembly, and adjusted by two thumbscrews. Over the years the rubber has of course deformed, so it needs all the help it can get. Similarly the focus unit is a sliding sleeve which relies on you to move the unit towards the rear of the chassis and magnetism to move it to the front of the chassis (it operating in a helical groove), so again this needs to be as free as possible. With these tasks completed I was now free to start on the electronic repairs.



So if we now turn to the diagram, we first find the smoothing and reservoir condensers C9A (50 $\mu$ F) and C10A (100 $\mu$ F). In my set C9A had been changed for a 100 $\mu$ F device, whilst C10A was original. So out they came for re-forming; a practice most of you should be familiar with. As it was, C9A re-formed nicely, but not C10A. Discretion being the better part of valour (*You mean being a miserable coward! – Dave*) (*How dare you, I'm a perfectly happy coward! – Self*), I changed both for a pair of brand new Pye condensers, these again having been reformed. Next candidate was C6A (12 $\mu$ F). Being a small electrolytic, it was changed on spec. for a modern 15 $\mu$ F component, thus keeping up the decoupling on the video stage. C7A (2 $\mu$ F) was also changed, mainly because one end was broken off! The boost reservoir C29A was shown the door too.

The final candidate for preliminary replacement was C17A, which decouples the screen grid of the sync. separator V1H. As a leaky-grid sync. separator works on a wing and a prayer voltage-wise, it makes sense. Hardened TV repairers/restorers will notice that I forgot to change one other component that is generally dead and can save some heartache – see if you can spot it. I'll tell you later if you can't.

So, next to go – waxed paper rubbish. There are an awful lot of waxed Cs in one of these sets, or a lot of awful waxed Cs, depending on your viewpoint, but thankfully most of the capacitors are ceramic dielectric and consequently should give no trouble. However, there are ones that should be replaced by default, just like those in a radio. So first of all we go for the kill on coupling condensers, so immediately C5B (sound coupling), C26A (line scan coupling) and C16A (video coupling to sync. sep.) are replaced. All these components can lead to what one of my colleagues calls 'a whole lotta hurt' if you don't, because all the associated valves are very bias-conscious. Finally there is one decoupler that needs attention: C13A, the AGC decoupler. With all this completed, I was now ready to plug it in, to an isolation transformer of course!

### **Making the damn thing work!**

We now move in time to the 6th of August, and present in the workshop is Dave Grant himself, the brains behind Dinosaur (*Good job somebody's got them! – Dave*) and we are staring at this Pye.

"What do you think, Dave?"

"I spit on your Pye."

Well, it's nice to know where you stand, isn't it? So the tube was carefully inserted into the chassis and a plug put on the mains lead. For convenience (*Be honest, cowardice!*) the set was put into the duff box and connected to the loudspeaker, and Test Card 'C' applied to the input. This is it, folks, switch-on time!

"Well, switch it on, then."

"You do it Dave, I want some eyebrows left. Oh, go on, the worst it can do is go bang."

"Exactly."

"Coward!"

"Got me this far."

So power was applied and the Engineering faculties are pressed into service, which are sight, sound, smell, and the ability to dodge a flying electrolytic...

"What have we got? " says I.

"No sound, no vision, timebases locked... and smoke."

"Smoke?- OFF!"

This is where we are introduced to **BBC Engineering Principle No.1**, which is –

"All circuits run on smoke. If the smoke is allowed to escape, the circuit ceases to function."

So of course we looked for the smoke, but naturally neither of us saw where it actually came from. So this neatly leads us into **BBC Engineering Principle No. 2**, which runs –

"If at first you cannot see any smoke then switch the apparatus on and let it smoke again on the assumption that all the smoke has not escaped."

This time of course we were both more observant, unlike the occasion at work involving a 20" Barco monitor and the E.H.T. assembly (*I told you never to mention the Barco! – Dave*) and consequently we saw the smoke. Thankfully it was nothing serious, just the dust being burnt off a rather sad and warped thermistor in the heater chain, which was left alone until a suitable replacement could be found. Still, at least they took the trouble to protect the heaters in this way.

Next we decided to tackle the sound fault; after all what good is a TV without sound? (*I'd expect nothing less from a Pye – Dave*) So, out with the chassis again, and the 'speaker from the duff box was removed and connected to the chassis. Mains applied again, but this time the Test Card was replaced with my trusty pre-war 'AVO' signal generator, set to 41.5 MHz and 1 volt output; after all, if something's deaf you do have to shout at it! Now it does say in the manual that if you change the valves in the Sound RF unit you do have to re-trim, the differences in inter-electrode capacity actually mattering at these frequencies and therefore liable to affect alignment.

So having read the line-up instruction, we then proceeded to adjust the RF T's L10A, T6A, and T7A. Working backwards, we found that T7A and L10A peaked quite happily, but not T6A. Next course then was to check the voltages around V1F. This can only be done after removing the screening can, which looks suspiciously like an 'Eddystone' box, from the chassis and then diving in with the meter. All voltages checked out okay, but when the probe was put on V1F's screen grid again the set let out a prodigious howl. Suddenly the deafness was cured! Wiggling the contact could make the sound come and go, and measuring the voltage directly on the pin of the EF50 showed no volts. This is where I save any potential restorer some hurt, and give you **Restoration Tip No. 1** –

The valveholders for the EF50s are enough to fill you with the urge to defenestrate the set, so go around all of them with a pair of long nose pliers and pinch *every* contact up. You'll be glad you did.

We now had sound to our satisfaction, so the time came to sort out the next problem which showed up when Test Card was connected, which was no field hold, even with the control moved from end to end in its slot.

Time for Restoration Tip No. 2.

A feature of these sets is the panel of slider-type wirewound presets at the back. These are festering misbegotten heaps of junk, so clean and regrease with a little Vaseline the metal guides, and the surface of the track. WARNING; do not be surprised if the tracks are o/c. The wipers disintegrate too for added value!

A number of mine were past it, but I had the luxury of a scrap chassis to pillage. The field hold control R42A was however innocent in this case, so attention was turned to the various high-value resistors in this circuit. The components R43A & C21A form the timing network for the field blocking oscillator and in this case, both components were faulty. Dave sat and peered at the chassis:

"Mike..."

"What?"

"What are you playing at?"

"Being a Venezuelan beaver-baiter. What's wrong?"

"Why does C21A still exist? Change it."

"Ah. Consider it history."

"Silly personage."

"Someone has to be."

C21A being leaky, and R43A being about 750K, both were well out of tolerance. Replacing these locked the scan with the control about central, so that was judged to be successful. Still no picture to be seen though, so it was time to draw the curtains!

A raster could now be seen, but it was horribly defocused, so I grabbed hold of the focus control. I'm sure it was easier to work than it would have been, but it did leave me wishing for a knob on the front panel.. once it had been adjusted I could now see a picture of sorts. It had plenty of line scan, but the field scan- well, what there was was horribly non-linear and small. To complicate matters, the field output stage in this set is DC coupled to the frame oscillator, so everything depends upon everything else to make it work properly!

Drastic action was called for, and so I delved into the cupboard and hauled out my trusty oscilloscope; you know, one of those things that makes wavy green lines that Gerry Wells doesn't understand. Time to go probing into the darkest recesses of the chassis, and the first thing you will note is that a lot of the frame oscillator is tied up with the HT divider chain. Here's where having the right diagram helps, because previous enemy action in this area showed a large number of the wrong resistors, possibly because the later diagram had been used. These components were corrected first, and then the 'scope was connected up.

*"What's that?"*

*"Field scan."*

*"Could have fooled me – I thought it was supposed to be a sawtooth."*

Well, Dave could be forgiven, as the scans were very folded-up at the bottom, and any variation of the controls just made it worse. Now remember earlier, when I said there was one component I should have changed, but didn't? All the old hands will be saying " Please, sir, it was C22A! " and they would be right. So here is **Restoration Tip No. 3** –

Check the cathode bias resistor of the field output stage, and at the same time replace any cathode decoupling capacitor.

However, this alone didn't provide a cure. There was only one thing left to do – check *all* the components in the field output stage for their value, as a quick perusal of their values in the diagram will show they are all candidates for becoming a calibrated open-circuit! Then of course there were the valves. . .to cut a long and tiresome story short, here are the components that were changed: R30B, R43A, R44A, R45A, C5C, C20B, C20D, C21A and C22A. Some of these condensers were metal Sprague ones, the ones that are normally considered bomb-proof. Not this time.

After all that, plus gratuitous insults and several cups of tea, field scan was restored, but it still only just filled the mask. The cure for this came after



reading an old copy of *Practical Television*, in an article written by the late and much-missed Les Lawry-Johns. According to L.L.J., the answer is to fit in the output stage an EF50 that on test passes >10mA, and *not* to use an ex-Services valve unless it has two black stripes on top. It does work, by the way! If you are interested in the article, it is in the September 1954 issue. Time, it seemed, to admire the work. No chance. We studied the picture long and hard, and spotted another fault.

"Did you do that?"

"What?"

"Make the contrast go up and down."

"No."

"Pass the 'scope..."

Now at this point I was presented with a dilemma. My oscilloscope has a 20MHz bandwidth: not much good in a T.R.F. running at 45MHz, you may say. Well, so would I, but then I didn't reckon on Smarty-pants Grant having a trick up his sleeve.

*"It's not in the video stages, so it must be in the RF stages. Great. My 'scope will pretend it can't see that, I know it. Ha! But I have a cunning plan."*

"Oh. A spare Tektronix up your sleeve now?"

*Shut up, Mike.*

I have to confess I wouldn't have thought of it; he hung the oscilloscope probe on the *cathodes* of the valves, where you could see video. It seems that the valves behave like infinite-impedance detectors, so you can see video at this point and not RF. We soon found the fault – C2Q. As it happened, C2Q (the cathode bias decoupler for V1D) fell apart whilst we probed all the components around V1D, so at this point we were intermittently getting negative feedback and consequently the gain was varying. So with a sigh, we showed it the door along with the bias resistor R14A too. After all, it was a fault waiting to happen..

This was it. Surely we must have found all the faults by now? Nope. The next one was discovered whilst we were settling down to admire our work, apart from which it was getting late. Time to adjust the brightness and contrast to suitable levels for viewing, bearing in mind that whilst you could get a fair amount of light out of the tube, it defocused readily.

"Mike..."

"Yes?"

"Why does the picture get darker when you adjust the brightness?"

"Does it?"

"And get lighter when you take your hand off the control?"

"Sorry?"

"...And get lighter when you take your hand off the control."

"Knew I should have stuck to clocks."

Remember Restoration Tip No. 2? Well, the curse of the Pye preset panel had struck again, as when the grid volts of the CRT were measured, a free grid was found. The darkening of the screen was in fact mains hum, capacitively coupled into the grid via the brightness knob. Reaching under the bench for the scrap chassis, I deftly removed a wiper assembly from a control and fitted it to mine. Brightness control was restored!

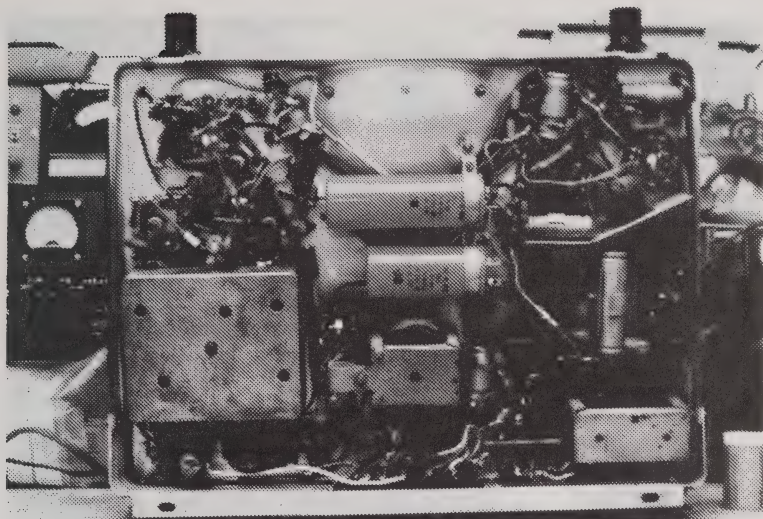
At long last, the set was working properly. The sound is quite pleasant from one of these sets, coming from a 6<sup>3</sup> speaker fed from a PL33. The picture? If my elderly 'Radar' tester can oblige me by cooking the tube a bit more, I'll be happy. After all, when I started, there was practically no emission from the cathode, and the tester got me this far. However, I shall endeavour to find another tube for the set; either the correct MW22-14 or possibly the later MW22-16, the Mullard approved replacement with an ion-trap. Either way, both tubes allow me to dispense with the extra EHT smoothing capacitor I filled to the set to make up for the lack of 'Aquadag' on the tube fitted.

The chassis was fitted into the better box, given a quick clean and the scans set up so that they filled the tube mask. The cabinet could in fact use a re-polish, as the finish is worn completely through around the front panel knobs for volume and contrast. The only problem to this approach is that extreme care with the 'Strypit' would need to be exercised near the 'PYE' transfer on the top, as to my knowledge nobody (re-) manufactures these. It's good enough for now, though. If I feel *really* adventurous, I'll graft the good base from the rough cabinet onto the good cabinet. Fun with a jigsaw or what?

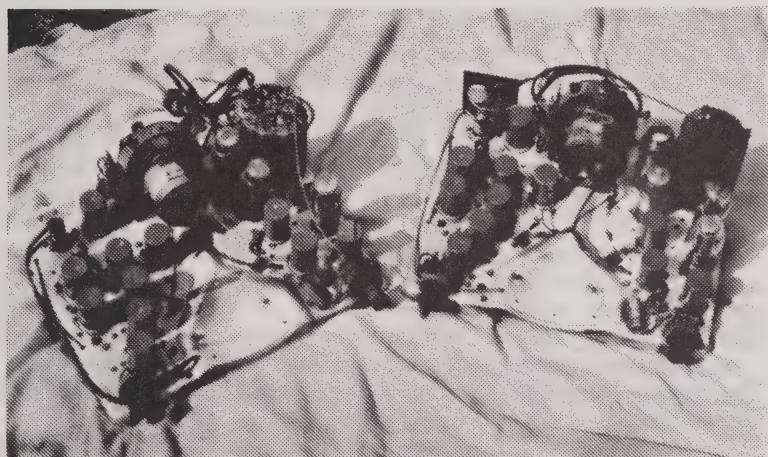
A while ago you may remember that I was concerned about the presence (or rather lack of it) of a CRT isolating transformer. I hadn't got a heater-cathode short as I had suspected (the 'Radar' told me so), rather I think that someone had been playing musical cabinets at some time in these sets' dim and distant past and consequently the transformer was there to either;

- \* power the missing MW22-14, which had gone heater-cathode short and had been replaced by the MW22-14c; or
- \* power the MW22-7 of the other set. Had they had their chassis swapped in the past?

Either way, I shall never know. All I do know is that they are quite a good set (*Pah! I spit on your Pye – Dave*) (*All right then, if your Murphy 178's so good, why don't you make **that** work? – self*) and quite sensitive; fed from a Lil Dino modulator, with a 20dB pad in series and following the Pye set-up leaves the 'Vision Sensitivity' control nicely backed off. At the time of writing it has sprouted another fault, but that's another tale...

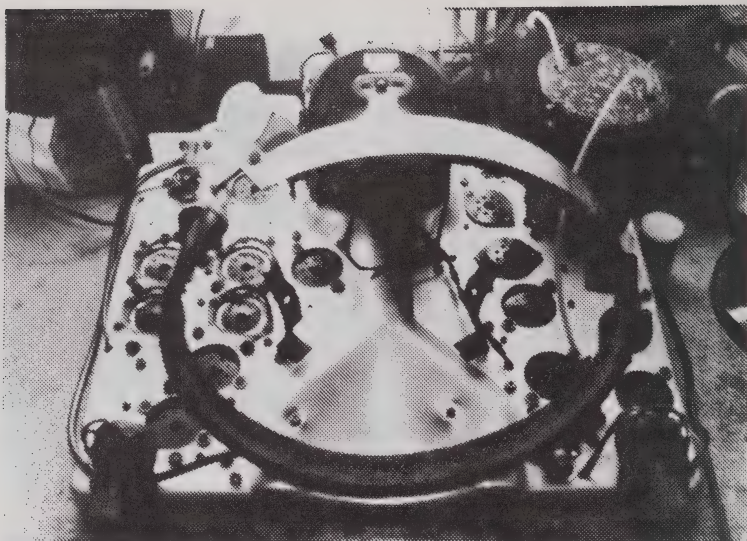


View of the chassis from below (set tipped over on its back). New electrolytics installed as replacements.



Am I seeing double?!? Mike has arranged two chassis side by side, on the bed by all appearances. I wonder if his wife Anne knows... I hope they didn't drip anything! Actually, looking at the gleam of these chassis, I bet they're clean enough to eat your lunch off. The bright red valves look very smart in the original colour prints too.





Looking down on the chassis from the front; the band which secures the round picture tube is prominent, whilst in this shot the valves have been removed.

## AND FINALLY....

### **BAIRD'S LAW**

The size of the TV set is inversely proportionate to the size of the home where it is installed. *Gerry Wells.*

### **DIRTY MAINS?**

"The amps are there and so are the volts... it's just bad electricity." *John Rea, speaking at a Baird Television demonstration in 1938. Contributed by Ray Herbert.*

### **EXPLODING SETS**

Talking of odd electricity and of Gerry and his never-ending fund of funny stories, at a recent British Vintage Wireless Society meeting, Gerry recalled the amusing (?) tale of a puzzled TV dealer soon after the war who had instructions to deliver and install a set in a railwayman's cottage next to Deptford station. When plugged in and switched on, it just went bang! Very strange.



Another set was procured and this one was thoroughly tested before being loaded into the van. And just before turning on the telly, the service hand made sure the house was not supplied by DC mains or anything silly like that. But this set too went bang and had to be repaired. Can you guess the reason? Answer following the next funny.

### **BIRDS'S EYE VIEWING**

An owl has become addicted to television, according to a report from China. It was said to have flown into the home of farmer Zhang Liuyou in the southern Chinese province of Jiangxi one evening in April 1992, perched on a beam and started watching television together with the family.

For the next three weeks, the owl came back, sometimes perching on the dinner table, and became a TV addict. In the spring of 1993, the owl built a nest under the eaves of the house, where he sleeps during the day and watches the silver screen perched on the beams or on the dinner table.

— *China Daily*, 26th June 1995, reported in *Fortean Times*, Feb/March 1996. The editor of *Fortean Times* is the son of television pioneer Lance Seiveking, by the way!

### **PUZZLE SOLUTION**

Easy when you know! The houses, like some other parts of the Southern Region of British Railways, were supplied with 25Hz (cycles in those days!) AC. Gerry says the lighting on London Bridge station was visibly flickery in those days. In fact London was a remarkable mixture of voltages and frequencies in those days, not to mention both AC and DC. A small area of Croydon remained on about 205V AC until the late 1960s, too low for normal 240V appliances. This meant that people buying TVs, fridges and washing machines had to buy expensive special versions, which soon became useless when normal 240V electricity was brought to this block of streets. In certain 'technical' circles Camberwell was always known as Camberwell DC, recalls Gerry. Not by some strange connection with Washington DC and AC Milan but because Camberwell remained one of the last boroughs to retain direct current supply mains!

### **AMERICAN HUMOR**

This is a partial transcript of a recent US government briefing given by Mike McCurry, office of the press secretary and was transmitted live on C-SPAN satellite television (yes, that's the television connection, in case the anecdote needs one). Each day he starts with informality and today was no different:

MR. McCURRY: Well, before we get going, any veterans of the First Lady's trip to India? Ah, Gene. Let me ask you a question. This comes from the

Reuter wire, so you're an appropriate person to ask this. Did you, while you were there in New Delhi, by any chance happen to visit the International Museum of Toilets, out of curiosity?

According to the Reuter wire here, when you go to the International Museum of Toilets, visitors are greeted with ferns sprouting from a toilet bowl at its main entrance. (Laughter). They take the business of bathrooms very seriously it reports here. The museum chronicles the rise of the toilet from 2500 BC to 1980 when the first auto-control toilet was installed -- a very important advance in technology. From the humble chamber pot to the mighty septic tank.

Q: This is on C-SPAN you know. (Laughter.)

MR. McCURRY: The vital role the toilet bowl played in history. (Laughter.) Gene Gibbons, you didn't see that?

Q: Can't imagine how we missed it.

MR. McCURRY: I can't imagine how the First Lady missed that on her trip.

Q: Did Jimmy Carter visit that exhibit with Sam Donaldson?

MR. McCURRY: I'll bet you when their government shuts down, the International Museum of Toilets stays open. How much you want to bet?

Q: It's just that the ones they have are so old it looks like a museum piece.

Q: What do you know?!!

### **How to save money – and annoy your neighbours!**

I have just gone to the post office to renew my car tax. Free car tax for a year! It's great to have an old banger on the road...

If you have any neighbours you don't like, go out and buy an old car that is 25 years old. Providing it has an MOT, you can tax it for free. If you have one of those neighbours who thinks they own the piece of road in front of their garden, planting an old banger outside their front door will have a wonderful effect (you don't have to admit it is your car). Leaving it there is best done at the dead of night.

As long as it does not cause an obstruction, there is no reason it cannot stay there for a whole year or until the MOT runs out. Had I known about this free car tax on old cars I could have sold several old Rovers at around £25 each.

You could even make money, buy a 3 .5 litre and sell the engine. The car will cost very little then and your neighbour is not to know that the wreck outside his drive does not have an engine!

*From the Dalkeith Auctions catalogue.*

### **A moment in time captured – and lost again!**

Smells, like thoughts, tastes and sounds, are creatures of the moment and normally soon vanish. I'll come back to this thought. A contributor to the Boatanchors list on the Internet recently remarked that notwithstanding the excellent build quality of old-time radio and television equipment, the people who constructed it were not averse to applying solder with a trowel. One contributor asserted he was removing excess solder by the pound!

I can relate to this, having rebuilt or taken apart many pieces of classic apparatus. But there's a bonus. Have you noticed the delightful smell you sometimes get? but sometimes when desoldering you get a whiff of scented, almost balsam-like resin in the old solder. Probably carcinogenic but fun all the same!

Ponder about it a moment longer... All this time that smell has been captured in the solder joint, now you have released it like the genie from the bottle, never to be recovered again. Rather like the smoke they make power transistors from; for all these years that smoke has been trapped inside the shiny metal can, then you go and apply 150 volts to the +12V rail and all that nice smoke is released.

Oh well, time to knock this issue on the head! On with the adverts.....  
[Editor]

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## TRICKY BUSINESS!

Having cine films copied to video is a tricky business – tricky because it's not just a matter of pointing a video camera at a projector screen and tricky because there are so many cowboy merchants about who charge top-whack prices for shoddy service. Price alone is no guide; you can pay a small fortune to someone who hands you back a tape that makes you wince to watch it.

Sales talk or sour grapes? Not at all! Just an honest reflection of the market as it exists. Everyone likes a bargain and if one guy offers you a telecine conversion for £15 and the other one charges £50, you'll probably be tempted to go for the cheaper deal. But why is it cheaper? Almost certainly because the equipment is cheaper. If your films are precious to you, do you really want a cheap transfer that will always annoy you?

But why is film-to-video transfer so complex? Why do people make such a mystique about it? mainly because it *is* complex! Both film and video reproduction rely on the insensitivity of the human eye to flicker. With television we are seeing 25 frames a second and with cine, 16.67, 18 or 24 frames a second. The brain tricks us into seeing continuous motion pictures but video cameras are not so easily fooled!

If you point a video camera (operating at 25 fps) at a film image (say 24fps) there's a discrepancy of one frame per second and this shows up as a strobe effect or flicker on the video image. We use specially calibrated telecine projectors that scan at the correct speeds (16.67fps silent, 25fps sound).

Again, the picture from most projectors is brighter at the centre than on the outside of the image. The human brain compensates for this but crude telecine conversions cannot. Film also has a greater gamma or dynamic range than video; in other words, the spread from the deepest blacks to the brightest whites of some film prints is more than domestic video cameras can handle. Crude telecine conversions often end up with too much contrast or inadequate definition in the lowlights.

That's why it makes more sense to use a professional when you need cine film transferred to video. It probably won't cost much more than having the job done by a cowboy, and it will certainly be cheaper than having to get the job done twice.

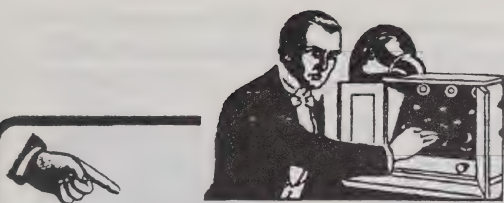
At Plato Video we use a Sony *broadcast* camera and professional-standard film chains. We're also one of the very few establishments in the country who can handle the transfer of 9.5mm sound film. So next time you are choosing someone to transfer your precious films, don't waste time with lesser outfits – come straight to the experts. We handle standard 8mm, super 8mm, 9.5mm and 16mm and still manage to give good old-fashioned personal service at highly competitive prices.

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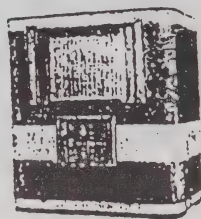
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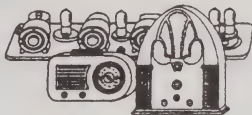
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Reader Service 81

The 1996/97 edition of the

# **SOUND AND VISION HOBBY AND HERITAGE YEARBOOK**

**is released at this year's NVCF in May!**

Have you got **your** copy? The price is just £3.50 post-paid and the new edition is enriched with all manner of updates and additional subject material.

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We're already working on next year's Yearbook so now's the time to send in data and advertisements. At the same time, if you are an auction house, club, dealer, museum, show promoter or specialist publication or supplier we'll be delighted to offer you **FREE PUBLICITY FOR YOUR SOCIETY, BUSINESS OR ORGANISATION!!!** There's no catch: lineage entries are free and there's no obligation to take paid advertising in the guide (we will try and persuade you but there's no obligation...). Ask for our information pack if interested. Tell us too if you'd like to sell the book (usual terms).

**All enquiries to Jonathan Hill at the Sunrise Press, 2-4 Brook Street, Bampton, Devon, EX16 9LY (tel: 01398-331532).**

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Enquiries to Philip Howard on 01202-292905. The catalogue of the next auction costs £2 (annual subscription by post £22) but you can phone or write for your first copy FREE.

**DALKEITH AUCTIONS, DALKEITH HALL, 81 OLD CHRISTCHURCH ROAD,  
BOURNEMOUTH, BH1 1YL.**

# TREASURES IN TRANSITION

This is the area for buying and selling all kinds of things to do with television, new or old. Want to join in? Then send us your advertisement: there is no charge, although if space is short we may have to 'prune' out the least relevant adverts or hold them over until next time. Advertisements are normally inserted for two issues: please indicate if you wish your ad. to run longer. There's no extra charge but we try to avoid repeating 'stale' material.

## WHAT'S IN AND WHAT'S OUT

These advertisements are primarily for private sales but traders are also welcome. The Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires people who are commercial dealers to make this fact clear in their advertisements. The letter (T) at the end of an advertisement indicates that the advertisement is trade' and (NS) that the advertisement has been placed by a non-subscriber. Any job advertisements are bound by the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975 and the Age Discrimination Act, 1997.

Test card music and old TV programmes are subject to the same rules of copyright as other recorded works and it is unlawful to sell amateur or professional recordings of same. Swapping same for no gain is probably not illegal but 405 Alive does not want to test the law on this subject so we will only accept advertisements from people who will indemnify us in this respect.

## PLUGS NEEDED

If you are selling any electrical appliance after 1st February 1995 without a plug on it, you are breaking the law. The Department of Trade and Industry has announced that domestic electrical appliances manufactured in or imported to the UK must be fitted with a correctly fused 13-amp plug.

## IMPORTANT DISCLAIMERS

1. Whilst care is taken to establish the *bona fides* of advertisers, readers are strongly recommended to take their own precaution before parting with money in response to an advertisement. We do not accept any responsibility for dealings resulting from these advertisements, which are published in good faith. That said, we will endeavour to deal sympathetically and effectively with any difficulties but at our discretion. Fortunately we have had no problems yet. In related collecting fields, replicas and reproductions can be difficult to identify, so beware of any items 'of doubtful origin' and assure yourself of the authenticity of anything you propose buying. And try to have fun: after all, it's only a hobby!

2. Much of the equipment offered for sale or exchange does not conform to present-day safety and electric standards. Some items may even be lethal in the hands of the inexperienced. This magazine takes no responsibility for these aspects and asks readers to take their own precautions.

**STANDARDS CONVERTERS.** See issue 17 for a construction article and the review of the David Grant product in issue 19. Pineapple Video have ceased production of their converter. Note also David Looser's advertisement in this section for a conversion service.



**MODULATORS.** Two designs for modulators have been published in *Television* magazine – see issue 1 of *405 Alive*, pages 10/11. We can supply photocopies at 10p a page. Alternatively you can buy ready-built modulators from Wilfried Meier and David Newman (see ad in this section).

**COMPONENTS.** Here is a brief list of suppliers; you can have a much extended two-page list by asking for FAQ SHEET 3 and sending one first-class stamp and a SAE to the editorial address. Most valves and other components are not hard to find: we can mention **Billington Export** (01403-784961, £50 minimum order), **Colomor Ltd** (0181-743 0899), **Kenzen** (0121-446 4346), **Wilson Valves** (01484-654650, 420774), **Sound Systems of Suffolk** (01473-721493) and **PM Components** (01474-560521). A good non-commercial supplier of hard-to-find types is Phil Taylor, 3 Silver Lane, Billingshurst, Sussex, RH14 0RP. For hard-to-find transistors we have heard of – but phone numbers may have changed – **AQL Technology** (01252-341711), **The Semiconductor Archives** (0181-691 7908), **Vectis Components Ltd.** (01705-669885) and **Universal Semiconductor Devices Ltd.** (01494- 791289). NB: Several of these firms have minimum order levels of between £10 and £20. For American books on old radio and TV, also all manner of spares, try **Antique Radio Supply**, (phone 00 1-602-820 5411, fax 00 1-602 820 4643). Their mail order service is first-class and they have a beautiful free colour catalogue (or is it color catalog?). Would you like to recommend other firms? If you think a firm gives good service please tell us all!

**SERVICE DATA.** The following firms are noted, and don't forget the annual volumes 'TV & Radio Servicing' at the public library.

**Mr Bentley**, 27 De Vere Gardens, Ilford, Essex, IG1 3EB (0181-554 6631). Thousands of technical manuals and service sheets.

**Alton Bowman**, 4172 East Avenue, Canadaville, NY 14424-9564, USA. Schematics for all USA radio, TV, organ, etc equipment 1920-1970.

**Mauritron Technical Services**, 47a High Street, Chinnor, Oxon., OX9 4DJ (01844-351694, fax 01844-352554). Photocopies of old service sheets, other technical data.

**Savoy Hill Publications**, Seven Ash Cottage, Seven Ash, Combe Martin, Devon, EX34 0PA (01271-882665). Large library of service data for photocopying. Fixed price means you may get a lot – or not a lot – for your money.

**Technical Information Services**, 76 Church Street, Larkhall, Lanarks., ML9 1HF (01698-883344/888343, fax 01698-884825), 'World's largest selection of manuals, 1930s to current date, British and foreign'.

In addition, 405 Aliver **Bernard Mothersill** has offered to photocopy (at cost) items from his own extensive collection of service sheets for 1950s and 60s TV sets. There are dozens and dozens, mainly Alba, Ekco, Bush, Ferguson/Thorn, GEC, Murphy, Perdio, Pilot, also a few Decca, Defiant, HMV, KB, McMichael, Peto Scott, Philco, Regentone and Ultra. Write with international reply coupon plus unstamped self-addressed envelope to him at 3 Cherrywood Close, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, Eire.

## HOW TO WRITE CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS THAT WORK

1. Start by mentioning the product or service you are selling or want. By doing so, you make it easier for the reader.

2. Always include the price. Research has shown that 52 per cent of people who read classified ads will not respond to ads that fail to mention a price.
3. Keep abbreviations to a minimum. Will the reader know what a NB207 is? If it's a 1956 12" table model TV, say so!
4. Put yourself in the position of the reader. Is all the information included?

**NOTE:** Thanks to referrals and mentions in the press we are now receiving a fair proportion of advertisements of sets for sale from members of the public. We print their descriptions in good faith but their descriptions may not be as accurate or as well-informed as those made by, say, a keen and knowledgeable enthusiast.

**A PLEA!** When sending in your advertisement please do put a date on it. We don't normally type in your advertisement on the day received and instead all small ads go into a file ready for typing later. But what happens then if I come across three undated ads all from the same person and one of them says 'This is my new ad, please cancel previous ones'? It *does* happen, so please be kind enough to date your ad.

### **IS IT VALUE FOR MONEY?**

It's unwise to pay too much but it's also unwise to pay too little.

When you pay too much, you lose a little money, that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing you bought it to do.

The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot. It can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it's well to set aside something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have enough to pay for something better. [*Attributed to John Ruskin, 1819-1900.*]

**STANDARDS CONVERSION:** Available soon, the latest version of our professionally designed unit for 405 enthusiasts. Prices start around £250 in kit form up to £800 for a fully-built professional unit. For more information contact me, Dave Grant. Phone 01689-857086 or through the Vintage Wireless Museum in London..

**STANDARDS CONVERSION SERVICE:** I will convert your 625-line tapes to broadcast-standard 405 lines on my digital line-store standards converter. Free of charge to subscribers of **405 Alive**. Please send blank tape (VHS only) for output and return postage. Input tapes can be accepted on Philips 1700, ELAJ, Video2000, Beta or VHS. David Looser, Maristow, Holbrook Road, Harkstead, IPSWICH, Suffolk, IP9 1BP. Phone 01473-328649. (*Publisher's note: David's offer is a most generous one and users may care to send him a free-will donation towards his not insubstantial construction costs as well. There may be a delay in handling conversions if many people take up his offer.*)

**PHILIPS 1500 TO VHS CONVERSION SERVICE:** I have pristine condition Philips 1500 VCRs newly refurbished, clean heads, etc., and offer to convert any pre-1976 material on 1500 tapes to VHS. Either send tapes (1500 and

your VHS blank plus adequate return postage) to Neil Ingoe, 77 Gladstone Avenue, Feltham, Middlesex, TW14 9LJ or telephone me on 0181 890 7633.

**AVAILABLE AGAIN:** Paste Polishing No. 5. Connoisseurs will know that this paste is the ideal material for cleaning bakelite and other plastics (even plastic baths!). Unlike Brasso and other liquid polishes, it leaves no active residue, and as it also contains a waxy agent, it also gives a gloss finish. Paste Polishing No. 5 is the stuff the Post Office used to polish up the old bakelite phones and is marvellous stuff – ask any user!

Unfortunately the demand for it is reduced nowadays (BT doesn't need it now!), so it is only manufactured at intervals. A batch has just been made and you can have a carton of 12 tubes for £16.86, post paid and including VAT. Smaller quantities are not available from Greygate, only in multiples of 12 tubes. Send your order to Greygate Chemical Company, Fir Tree Lane, Groby, Leicester, LE6 0FH. (Tel: 0116-287 7777). And do it today while stocks are still available!

(If you really want only one or two tubes, smaller quantities are available under the name Baykobrite from THE RADIOPHILE, "Larkhill", Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP.)

**REPAIRS: vintage TVs, radios and testgear repaired and restored.** Personal attention to every job and moderate prices. Estimates without obligation – deal with an enthusiast! (BVWS and BATC member) Please include SAE with all enquiries – thanks. Dave Higginson, 28 High Street, Misterton, Doncaster, Yorks., DN10 4BU. (T). Tel: 01427-890768.

**REPAIRS: vintage TV and radio repair service** in the South East by engineer with 23 years in the trade. Contact Camber TV & Video Centre, Lydd Road, Camber, Sussex or telephone Peter on 01797-225457. SAE with enquiries please. I also wish to buy early BBC-only TVs. (T).

**SALE:** Kenzen is having a sale of valves. Most TV types available at £1 each. Send wants list and SAE for a quotation. Kenzen, Unit 9, 16-20 George Street, Balsall Heath, BIRMINGHAM B12 9RG (0121-446 4346). For our latest free lists please send A4 SAE with 36p stamp. We also supply video monitors, computers, test gear, oscilloscopes, etc at bargain prices for callers. Please telephone first if you wish to pay us a visit. (T)

**FOR SALE:** IVC 1" colour/bw VTRs, types 711P, 741, 761P; Ampex 5103 mono 1" VTR, lovingly restored with many new parts but needs new head (can be repaired). Nine unused tapes for Ampex. Good home is more important than price. Gino Mancini, daytime 01483-770331 (NS).

**FOR SALE:** Shelves and shelves of **TV and radio valves**, new and used, plus a few boxed LOPTs from the 1950s and spares for Philips projection sets. Also a camera cable tester for the CPS Emitron camera, made by EMI Labs

circa 1950. Ex-BBC Birmingham, would look very good with a bit of TLC. Offers around £40-50 for this rare item. Wanted: communications receivers and aircraft radio equipment. John Coggins, Coventry area. Phone 01203-302668 any reasonable hour (NS).

#### **BOOKS FOR SALE:**

- ❖ ATV Show Book No. 1. Adprint 1957. Almost mint copy of this popular ATV picture-book series. Plenty of early ATV shows featured with lots of production photographs of ITV stars. £8.50.
- ❖ See it Happen – The Making Of ITN. Geoffrey Cox. 1983. Fascinating illustrated history of ITN. £6.
- ❖ ITV 1982. Getting rarer. £5
- ❖ ITV Annual 1963 £3. No spine paper. Plenty of studio shots.
- ❖ World radio & TV Handbook. 1973, 1975. £3 each.
- ❖ Doctor Who Annual No. 1. £5. Slightly chewed cover.
- ❖ The Blue Peter Book Of Television. £3 VGC
- ❖ RCA Receiving Tube Manual. 1966. Lots of circuits and details. £5
- ❖ IBA Technical Review (No.2) Technical Reference Book. 1977. £3.
- ❖ IBA Technical Review. (No.10) A Broadcasting Engineer's Vade Mecum. May 1978. £3. These two are vital for any 'techie' and are usually missing from other sets.
- ❖ Essentials Of Electricity For Radio and Television Slurtzberg and Osterheld. Pub. McGraw Hill 1950. Illustrated. No d/w £5.

All books clean and in vgc. Postage £1 per book. Contact Dicky Howett 01245-441811.

**FOR SALE: Ferguson 989T** console TV, circa 1950-1953. Dark oak console, approx. 17" screen, beautiful cabinet with doors and mock drawer fronts – a lovely piece of furniture in very clean condition. Currently this is sitting in an antique shop in Minehead, Somerset and has been spotted by a BVWS member, Alex Casey. Price for this scarce set is negotiable, probably around £50. Alex is prepared to pass on offers, even bring it to the NVCF at the NEC in May but you'll need to pay him up front! His number is 01643-703234 during office hours.

**FOR SALE: Pye industrial 14" monitor**, based on VT4 television chassis, but no RF section. Probably late 1950s/early 1960s. Enamel Pye badge on front, classic Pye mauve and blue finish. Nothing missing, needs repaint and checking over. Was apparently working when sold 25-30 years ago by Birmingham University. You can't go wrong at £10. Andy Emmerson, 01604-844130.

**FOR SALE: Hitachi SV-640 half-inch open-reel video recorder and box of unused tapes**, £65 o.n.o.. Buyer collects from south Yorks.. Phone Andrew on 01709-557531 after 6pm.



**FOR SALE: Sherlock Holmes episode *The Case of the Christmas Pudding*** on standard 8mm film, as featured in last issue of *405 Alive*. £6 post paid. Alan Keeling, 28 Walters Road, Oldbury, Warley, B68 0QA.

**WANTED: Sony CV-2000 half-inch video recorder.** Need not be working but must be complete. Please ring Simon Ellis on 0181-614 2877.

**WANTED: Emiscope type 3/20 or 3/16 10" CRT** or equivalent, either on its own or in set, but must be viable (mine is as flat as a pancake!). Your price paid if it's a good tube since it can make my 'new' (well, it does actually look almost like new) HMV 1807A complete. Also interested in maker's service sheets, customer instructional for this set. Can swap other period literature or pay cash. Andy Emmerson 01604-844130.

**WANTED: WATSON 8" f/4.5 image orthicon turret camera lens.** (i.e. fixed focus). Any condition suitable. Also old STUDIO LIGHTS. MICROPHONES, stands etc. Plus books/brochures on TELEVISION. Contact Dicky Howett 01245 441811.

**MESSAGE:** Help! Does anybody know what, if any, designation the Murphy TPG11s supplied to the BBC carried? I know they weren't TV/TG1 or TV/TG2; does any 'old hand' have any ideas? Mike Izycky, 14 Cedar Close, Market Deeping, Peterborough, PE6 8BD, telephone 01778-344506. Thanks.

## GOOD HOMES WANTED

The following items have been offered free of charge or almost free by their generous owners, though they will doubtless accept small donations if you are pleased with what you get! This latter kind of gesture goes down well since in many instances the advertisers are not members of our group and are pensioners, widows, etc.. Where no phone number is given please enclose SAE with your letter, it's only fair.

In each case the advertiser has agreed to hold the items for one month from publication – after then it's probably the corporation rubbish dump or an antique shop. You have been warned. Feedback indicates that several of these sets are *not* in fact claimed... what a shame!

Murphy V873CU television, beautiful tambour doors. 33.5" wide, 34" tall, 15" deep. Phone Ron Isham (NS) on Brackley 01280-703701 or write 8 Valley Road, BRACKLEY, Northants., NN13 7DQ.

Good Home needed for a Baird dual-standard mono TV model 626. Cabinet in reasonable condition, but the back cover has the customary gaping hole above the mains dropper (caused by high heat levels from the dropper). The mains dropper has gone, and I've run out of spare ones. The system switch is hard wired to 625 as it disintegrated some 10 years ago. This set was in regular use until last autumn. Tube is almost pristine (no silvering when last used, but may need a run to revive it), with a small ion burn in centre. Buyer to collect, free to any owner who will treat this set with the same TLC I gave it over the last 22 years. I'm sorry to part with it, but haven't got the room to store it. The original valve UHF tuner was replaced with a transistorised tuner just after I acquired it in 1973! It has given me 22 years of sterling service in return for an occasional 'feed' of a mains dropper or two! Nigel Morgan, 19 Cowslip Road, Widmer End, High Wycombe, Bucks., HP15 6BJ.

# HOW TO CONTACT 405 ALIVE

*The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.*

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

**Letters** are always welcome and nearly all of them (unless marked *Not For Publication*) get published. Lengthy screeds may be edited for clarity. Electronic mail is also welcome. Address this to [midshires@cix.compulink.co.uk](mailto:midshires@cix.compulink.co.uk)

**Advertising rates.** Classified: free to subscribers, £1 per advertisement for others. Display ads, using your artwork: £5 per half page, £10 full page. Charges must be pre-paid.

**Notes & Queries** (for publication in the magazine). Keep them coming... and your answers to them.

**Enquiries requiring an individual reply.** These are answered when time permits. You **must** include a stamped addressed envelope **and** preferably also your telephone number (in case it is quicker to telephone a reply). Please be patient - thanks.

**Articles** are also most welcome. We get so many good ones that publication can take up to two years or so, but don't let that deter you. They can sometimes be held back when we group two or three together when they support a common 'theme'.

**Payment.** We're a not-for-profit magazine so sadly we cannot pay for material. On the other hand, full-length feature articles do earn the author a year's free subscription once published so that's an incentive. You retain copyright of your article so you are free to offer it - probably in a revised version - to other, mainstream periodicals to earn some money. At least one of our contributors does this very successfully.

**But I can't write like the big names do!** Don't worry. We can sort out your grammar and spelling. It's the facts and your ideas that count.

**How to submit material.** If at all possible, please **TYPE** your contributions using a dark, black ribbon. This enables them to be read straight into the word-processor by a document scanner. Magic! Contributions on computer disk are particularly welcome and your disk will be returned. We can handle most variations of IBM PC and CP/M disks in 3.5" and 5.25" size but please process your words in some popular word-processing format, ideally as an ASCII or WordStar file. Through the good offices of *Radio Bygones*, we can handle Amstrad PCW and Macintosh disks, but not BBC format. If in doubt please ring first on 01604-844130. Thanks. You can now also fax your letters, ads and articles on 01604-821647.

## BACK NUMBERS

All stocks of back issues have been sold now, apart from nos. 1/2/3/4 combined edition reprint (£5). Prices post-paid.

## FAQ FILES

FAQs are frequently asked questions, so we are keeping two files of FAQs and their answers ready for printing out on request for readers. These files

will be updated as new information comes in. These two files are already quite lengthy and contain material already published, so it would not be fair on established subscribers to reprint them in the magazine. FAQ file 1 runs to 24 pages and covers general points about old TV and how to get old television sets working again. FAQ file 2 is a reprint on all the articles on test card music and ITV station ident themes; it covers 11 pages. FAQ file 1 costs £3.00 and file 2 costs £2.00 (both post paid). These prices cover just the cost of copying and postage plus the horrendous cost of banking your cheque (68 pence!). FAQfile 3 covers suppliers of hard-to-find components and service data; for this one send one first class stamp and a SAE.

### **WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR OWN COPY OF 405 ALIVE?**

Perhaps you are reading a friend's copy – now you can't wait to receive your own copy four times a year. Send a cheque for £16 (inland), Eurocheque for £18 (abroad) made out to Andrew Emmerson or \$30 cash (world air mail), which will pay for a year's subscription (four issues). There is a 5 per cent surcharge for credit card transactions. Our address is 71 Falcutt Way, Northampton, NN2 8PH.

### **IS 405 ALIVE EXPENSIVE?**

There are some people who think our subscription price is poor value for money; they are the people who know the price of everything and the value of nothing. This magazine is run on a not-for-profit basis and anyone genuinely interested in seeing the accounts is welcome to enquire (and be convinced). Small-scale printing and publishing is extremely expensive and we gain none of the benefits of scale enjoyed by larger circulation titles! Many of our readers tell us the good deals they find in the small advertisements more than pay for the cost of buying the magazine, but if you are genuinely unhappy, just tell us and we'll refund your money for the outstanding portion of your subscription. Not many other magazines make that kind of offer!



## EXCHANGE PUBLICATIONS

You may wish to contact the following allied interest groups and publications (please send SAE with all enquiries).

**BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY:** Gerald Wells, Vintage Wireless Museum, 23 Rosendale Road, London, SE21 8DS.

**VINTAGE RADIO CIRCLE:** Geoff Williams, 4 Sunnyside Park, St Ives, Ringwood, Hants., BH24 2NW.

**BRITISH AMATEUR TELEVISION CLUB:** Dave Lawton GOANO, Grenehurst, Pinewood Road, High Wycombe, Bucks., HP12 4DD.

**NARROW BANDWIDTH TV ASSOCIATION:** Doug Pitt, 1 Burnwood Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham, NG8 2DJ.

**TEST CARD CIRCLE** (TV trade test transmissions and test card music): Stuart Montgomery, 2 Henderson Row, Edinburgh, EH3 5DS.

**BBC TEST CARD CLUB,** Keith Hamer, 7 Epping Close, Derby, DE3 4HR.

**SAVERS OF TELEVISION AND RADIO SHOWS (S.T.A.R.S.),** 96 Meadvale Road, Ealing, London, W5 1NR.

**IRISH VINTAGE RADIO & SOUND SOCIETY:** Henry Moore, 9 Auburn Close, Killiney, Co. Dublin.

**RADIO BYGONES** (vintage radio technology): Geoff Arnold, 9 Wetherby Close, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 8JB.

**THE RADIOPHILE** (vintage radio): Chas. E. Miller, "Larkhill", Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP.

**TELERADIO NEWS** (current radio and TV transmitter news, long-distance reception): Keith Hamer, 7 Epping Close, Derby, DE3 4HR.

**TUNE INTO YESTERDAY** (Old-Time Radio Show Collectors Association): Membership secretary: Roger Bickerton, 3 Park Edge, Harrogate, HG2 8JU.

**VINTAGE LIGHT MUSIC SOCIETY:** Stuart Upton, 4 Harvest Bank Road, West Wickham, Kent, BR4 9DJ.

**ROBERT FARNON SOCIETY** (also light music): David Ades, Stone Gables, Upton Lane, Seavington St. Michael, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 0PZ.

**MEMORY LANE** (78rpm-era popular music): Ray Pallett, 226 Station Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3BS.

**IN TUNE INTERNATIONAL** (music of the years 1935-1960): Colin Morgan, 12 Caer Gofaint, Groes, Denbigh, Clwyd, LL15 5YT.

**PROJECTED PICTURE TRUST** (cinema history): Harold Brown, 2 Eleanor Gardens, Aylesbury, Bucks., HP21 7LT.

**VINTAGE FILM CIRCLE:** Alex Woolliams, 11 Norton Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2EZ.



## THE BACK PAGE

**405 Alive** (ISSN 0969-8884) is an independent, not-for-profit magazine devoted to the study and preservation of old television technology and programming. It has no connection with, and is not subsidised by, any other organisation. Publication is four times a 12-month subscription period but not at set times.

**Editorial policy.** This magazine acts not only as a forum for research, the republication of archive material and as a monitor of current developments but also as a means for all interested in this field to keep in touch. Readers are encouraged to submit articles, photographs, notes and letters.

We print readers' addresses only in small advertisements or when otherwise asked to. We are always happy to forward letters to contributors if postage is sent. All work in connection with *405 Alive* is carried out on a voluntary unpaid basis – sorry, it's only a hobby! – but writers retain copyright and are encouraged to republish their articles in commercial publications. In addition, authors of feature articles normally earn a year's free subscription, although this offer is made at the editor's discretion and may be withdrawn.

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